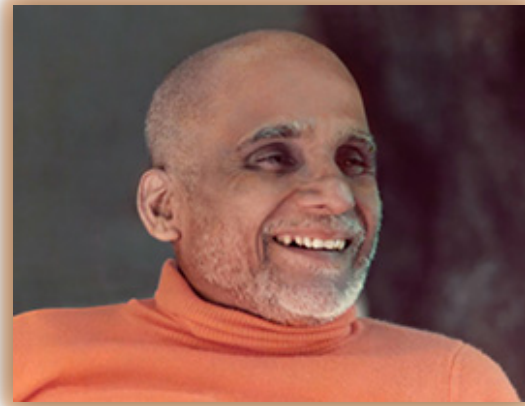


THE PROCESS OF YOGA



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ABOUT THIS EDITION

Though this eBook edition is designed primarily for digital readers and computers, it works well for print too. Page size dimensions are 5.5" x 8.5", or half a regular size sheet, and can be printed for personal, non-commercial use: two pages to one side of a sheet by adjusting your printer settings.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Publisher's Note..... | 4 |
| Chapter 1: The Spirit of Life | 5 |
| Chapter 2: The Structure of the Universe | 25 |
| Chapter 3: Recognising the Independent Status of Things | 50 |
| Chapter 4: The Psychology of Yoga | 74 |
| Chapter 5: The Stages of Practice..... | 101 |
| Chapter 6: The Process of Meditation | 124 |
| Chapter 7: The Spirit of Sadhana..... | 145 |

Publisher's Note

This is a series of discourses that Swamiji gave during the ashram's annual Sadhana Week in 1972. Swamiji goes over the stages through which the seeker passes on the way to higher thinking, living and being.

Chapter 1

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Spirituality is the condition of the spirit. This definition would be indication enough as to whether we have to live a life spiritual or not. The nature of the spirit is, therefore, what we mean by 'the spiritual'. And if we are to have a knowledge of the spirit, we shall also know whether it is necessary to be spiritual or whether it is possible for us to conduct ourselves in any manner other than the spiritual.

The spirit is what we generally call the essence or the substance of anything. We generally put a question: "What is the spirit of the whole situation?" "What is the spirit of what that person spoke?" and so on, by which we mean that the spirit of anything is the quintessential substance of that particular thing. The spirit, therefore, differs from the form, from the letter, and from the appearance.

While we try to investigate into the nature of the spirit in order to know what 'the spiritual' is, we simultaneously get into the question as to where the spirit of a thing lies. Also, how many spirits could be there, inasmuch as we seem to be having many things, many objects, many persons in this world. If the spirit of any particular object or thing is to be something, and the spirit of another object or another thing is to be another thing, then there could be infinite spirits, infinite essences; and if spirituality is the condition of the spirit, we can have innumerable conditions of spirituality.

Hence, the question that we pose to ourselves should be pointed and should go to the core thereof. Any effort or any

action whatsoever in any direction and in any field of life is always preceded by a knowledge, an understanding of the principles involved in the effort or the action. We have a theory and a practice in every kind of activity, profession, business or effort in life. We have an educational career precedent to the efforts that we put forth in life. The educational process is the period of scientific training in the art of the implementation of that very science in practical day-to-day life. And life is nothing but a tremendous effort on the part of the human being to live it in a profitable and proper manner.

Therefore, to live life would be our greatest effort. Every effort in any direction is only a form of the supreme effort to live properly and in the proper direction. Our profession or work we do in life matters little. All this variegated effort of ours in various fields of activity boils down to the effort of living the fundamental life: a successful, profitable, useful, meaningful and significant life. We do not want to vegetate, but we wish to live. What a human being aspires for is to live life in its highest quality, in its greatest intensity, and in its widest extent. Our aspiration is not merely to get on or pull through life. That is what we mean by vegetating – somehow getting on. But we are not satisfied with merely somehow getting on in life till we breathe our last. We have an inner longing to live life at its best, in the highest quantity and quality possible.

Now, this is a question that arises simultaneously with the question as to the spirit or the essentiality of life. The question we have raised before ourselves is, therefore, a very wide question. It is broad enough to bring within its gamut every other possible question, because the question

of life is a single question comprehending every other question possible. Nothing can be wider than life, nothing can be more beneficial than life, and nothing can be more dear and significant than what we call life. Life is the spirit of the universe; and we enter into an investigation of the nature of the spirit of life. This question, when answered, will also answer the question as to what spirituality is. And together with this, the other question will also be answered as to whether it is necessary to be spiritual and whether we can live without being spiritual. All these questions are brothers and sisters, co-related among one another, and all point to a single question ultimately, a big question mark of the problem of life.

The spirit of life may be taken as the subject of our discussion today. What is life, and how do we manage to live our life? What should we live for? These are co-related questions. 'Life' is a general term for the manner of existing, the manner of progressing and the manner of aspiring towards an end or a goal. From this point of view, life seems to be the general urge present in everything in creation. It is present in me, in you, and in every blessed thing in this world. Life is the meaning of creation. Life is the answer to the question of creation. Life is the beginning and the end of all aspiration. And life is a single term summing up everything conceivable in our minds.

Do we live? Yes. Does anything else also live? Yes. Is there a difference between my life and your life? This is a very interesting and significant question. Broadly speaking, I am giving an answer from the point of view of mere surface observation. My life and your life may not be identical in every respect because we associate life with

various factors of experience. Physical existence, social existence, mental and intellectual existence are all associated with the definition and question of life. And as these levels of experience vary from person to person, life led by different persons and different entities in creation may be said to differ from one another. The lives of a plant and a human being cannot be regarded as identical in every respect, inasmuch as we see human beings living differently from the way in which plants in the vegetable kingdom live; and animals live in a different manner altogether.

But, we are not enquiring into the nature of the form of life led or being lived by the beings in this world. We are questioning into the nature of life as such, and not into the nature of the way in which the life is lived. For example, we may put a question in regard to the nature of diet. The diet of one person need not be the same as the diet of another person. Perhaps we have as many kinds of diet as there are people in this world. But the question of diet is a scientific one. It is a philosophical question in the sense that it goes to the depth of the very nature of the question of diet itself. While the form of the diet or the food that we take may differ in different cases or instances, the purpose of the intake of diet, the scientific basis of the intake of diet, and the principle involved in dietetic discipline may not vary from person to person. The purpose of the intake of diet seems to be the same everywhere in creation. Whether it is the diet taken by a plant or the grub swallowed by a bird, the food taken by an animal or the lunch enjoyed by a human being – whatever be the form of the diet, the purpose behind it does not seem to be essentially different. There appears to be a basic common factor as a scientific

principle underlying the intake of diet. Likewise, we may say that there appears to be a scientific, logical grounding of process behind the manner in which we live in the world, though we all live differently from the point of view of our variegated individuality.

How we live is one question, but why we live is another question. Why we should live at all seems to be behind the question of how we live in this world. Just as there is a difference between civilization and culture, there is a difference between the how and the why of life. It is easy to know how we live because that is our civilization in conformity with our national tradition, etc. We live in different ways according to our culture, tradition, religious background, and the faiths that we entertain in our minds in accordance with the social setup of our circumstance. In this manner we live – economically, politically, socially, individually, communally, etc. But why do we live? What is the purpose of our living? What does it matter to us if we do not live at all? Who is going to be the loser if we do not exist? These are more difficult questions to answer. It is the spirit of life into which we enter when we put the question: “Why are we living at all?”

While the form of life is given to us by the answer to the question of how we live, the spirit of life comes out when we try to answer the question of why we live at all. We cannot easily answer this question: “Why do we live?” We will close our eyes and scratch our heads, but an answer will not come. “I will live. I want to live.” That is all. Everything enters into this quintessence of our need for living, the necessity of life. When everything is taken away from us, we ask for life. “Save my life. You can take away everything

else.” When political catastrophes and confusion take place in a rebellious atmosphere, people lose all their property. Sometimes they even lose their spouse and children, but they would not mind if all is lost, if only life is saved. They flee from country to country, from hot atmospheres to cooler ones, from difficult conditions to easier ones because, finally, life is a satisfactory answer to its own question. Life’s question is answered by life itself. It cannot be answered by anyone else. We cannot answer the question of life through instruments, through association with properties, possessions, etc. The value of our life is that life itself. The value of our existence in this world does not depend upon the wealth that we possess, the associations that we have in society, the status that we occupy, or any such thing whatsoever. We have a value to ourselves. That is why we want to be saved, finally. Capital punishment is supposed to be the highest of punishments because it is the wiping of that which we regard as the dearest and the nearest to us. Even lifelong imprisonment is not regarded as so bad as capital punishment, because it is the wiping out of our existence. Our life itself is cut off; and what could be worse than that? Nothing is dearer than life.

But why life should be so dear, is our question again. We are entering into the spirit of all things. Why should life be so dear to us? We have many other things which are perhaps more endearing and more beautiful in this world. We have enchanting atmospheres, transporting beauties in the world. Why should we be prepared to give up all these wonders of creation and cling to this thing called life which we cannot see, which we cannot understand, and which seems to be nowhere within the ken of our perception?

Why do we cling to life even if we have to lose everything else? This is the spirit of things, which eludes the grasp of our understanding. The spirit cannot be known so easily. We cannot know what life is because we cannot know what spirit is. Life and spirit are the same. We are so much engaged in the form of life, so busily entangled in its appearances and shape that we have found no time to go deep into the spirit of life. We have no time even to breathe. We are so busy, whatever be our profession. Everyone is so very busy that he or she has hardly any time to sleep. The moment one gets up, once again there is a busy tangle of life.

One of the interesting features of the principle of life is that it will not give us time to think as to what it is. Sometimes people call this *maya*, the inscrutable power that seems to be pervading all creation, preventing people from knowing what life is. It is inscrutable, indefinable. No one knows where it is, and yet it seems to be everywhere, equally grasping and controlling everyone and everything in creation. Life and spirit seem to be one and the same thing. And all our struggles, all our sweating and labour, all our efforts and aspirations seem to ultimately be directed to the goal of knowing what life is and taking the best of it.

To take the essence of life and live it at its best is also to know what life is. An ignorant person cannot be a happy person. The greater is our knowledge, the greater also is our happiness. This is something well known to us, having lived practically in this world. The wider and more intense is our understanding of a thing, the greater is our capacity and power over that thing. Our control over things increases in proportion to our knowledge of things. The lesser we

understand a thing, the lesser also is our power over it, so that when we do not understand life, we cannot have any control over it. It will control us. We are puppets in the hands of nature, as it were. We are tossed hither and thither by fate and Providence, and we do not have any say in crucial matters in life, all because of the fact we have no knowledge of anything. We are ignoramuses of the first water, in matters final and crucial. We seem to be very wise in small things, in matters that are only on the surface, but we know next to nothing about profounder things.

Therefore, we have contented ourselves with merely a surface view of things. We neither want to know the depths of things, nor have the time to know it. We have no time because we are busy. We have no aspiration to know it because we have not yet been properly put into the right educational career in the university of life itself. We have been satisfied with our little earning, with our little paper degree, and we have been carried astray by the wind of public opinion which can drive us in any direction it likes, so that we have not known up to this time our own worth or the real worth of anything in life. Hence, whatever be our learning, we are unhappy persons. Whatever be the position we occupy in society, we are finally sorrowing hearts. We have some complaint to make about everything in life, whatever be our possession, whatever be our education and learning or status.

Why should this be so? Why should we be so poverty-stricken in the essentiality of our being? Why are we bankrupt in ourselves while we seem to be rich in the public eye? What is this mystery? Has anyone found time to question into this and find an answer to this question? Why

should we be so grieved and agonised in our depths while we are looking beautiful outside? “The spirit of life has not been known,” is again the answer. “Life has not been understood,” is the answer. Why are we not interested in knowing it, entering into its spirit, and grasping it at its bottom? We have not been put in the proper direction. We have been misled right from our birth by social circumstances and public opinions, which is the ethics that we usually follow. Our ethics is social ethics. It is not metaphysical or spiritual ethics. If all people say, “It is all right,” we think it is good. Mostly, our moral standard is a social standard. We do not go into the scientific validity of the principle involved because the social standard seems to be the overwhelming majority, and we are afraid that going into the scientific depth may contradict public opinion.

Inasmuch as we are living on the surface of social morality, social ethics, social etiquette, social setup, and a social goal of life, we live as social elements and not as spiritual beings or something worthwhile in our own selves. But, when we leave this world, which is the fate of everyone one day or the other, do we go as social beings? Do people come with us? Does social ethics or morality help us? Nothing should be regarded as our association at the time when we are to leave this world. That quintessence of life follows us. The essentiality or the substance of things that we have seen and observed, and the life we have lived, follows us.

Thus, we are to be re-educated. We are still small children in the kindergarten level of education, small babies in the life process. We are unlettered, untutored from the point of view of life taken in its completeness. It is,

therefore, pointless to imagine that we are well off in life. We will be taught a lesson to our bitter experience one day or the other if we are so complacent to think that we are well off in life. One day or the other we will be put to the necessity of eating the bitter fruit of life. No one has gone without tasting it, and we are not going to be an exception. Everyone has to pass through the same process of training and discipline in the school or the university of *prakriti*, nature in its completeness.

We should first of all be humble. We have to realise that we have learned nothing. We have to forget what we have learned in order that we may know something new and more valuable in life. The egoism or the arrogance of our learning has to go. The pride of our wealth and our status has to be shed. We should stand like a child, as one to be admitted to the first level of education in the school of nature. Let this humility be our qualification for our entry into this university of life, having forgotten all the pride of our original learning that we got from the social atmosphere of life. Life is not social, ultimately. It is something more than social, but we are accustomed to living only socially. From our childhood, from our birth onwards, we are in society. We live with father, mother, brother, friend, and so on, so that we are taught to think in terms of society. Everything is judged from the point of view of multitude – from the public point of view, from the point of view of the quantity of things. We have never been taught to live life from the point of view of its quality and worth.

Nature, creation, is not a social setup, though it has a social form. It is supernormal in its structure. It is also

super-moral and super-intellectual, super-scientific and super-logical, ultimately speaking. It is not as we think it to be. All the while we have been under the impression that life is something; but it is not what we think it to be. We are misled even by people whom we observe in life. We develop a sort of relationship with persons under the impression that those people are something, but suddenly there is a change in their nature and we begin to realise, "I made a mistake. I thought this person is like this, but today I learned a bitter lesson. That person has turned a different pose altogether." We are disillusioned almost every day, and then we become better persons by practical experience. But why do we have to receive kicks and blows in life and then learn? Can we not learn without receiving kicks? Why not learn voluntarily rather than be given a painful kick and be taught the lesson of life? If we will not learn of our own accord, deliberately and voluntarily, we will be taught by a whip and we will have to learn it by the pain of suffering. Mostly we learn by suffering because we are not prepared to voluntarily enter the school of nature's education. Why? Because we are proud of our social work and our social position, and a vanity has crept into our personality without our knowing what is happening. The vanity that spoils our entire career in life is a false notion that we are something worthwhile, while really we have nothing worthwhile in us. While we are hollow and empty within, we pose for something substantial and worthwhile. The truth of the matter is brought to the surface one day or the other. We cannot hide our nature always; the thief is caught one day or the other. Thus, may we gird up our loins to learn voluntarily under the tutorship of nature, under the

fatherhood of God rather than be driven to disciplinary action on the part of nature for having not intelligently and honourably allowed ourselves to be educated in a progressive manner. The spirit of life is to be learnt through a process of right education.

Now we are on the borderland of the real problem before us. We are on the portals of the great university of nature. We have not yet entered it. We have just seen the notice board, as it were: The University of Nature. We are seeking admission into it. And our primary and essential qualification is a humility of character and an inward admission of the fact that we need to be educated rather than go with the vain and false assumption that we are already educated. Then we shall be admitted into this school or university of nature; and we shall be taken care of beautifully, as a mother would take care of her child.

This university is a place of teaching and training, and also a hostel where we can dwell. It is everything combined. We shall be beautifully trained, provided we are humble and obedient children; and there will be no dearth of teachers. Teachers will flow from all sides when the disciple, the student, is ready for the career of training.

But preconceived notions have to be shed first because a person who already knows things, or thinks that he already knows, cannot be taught anything. It is necessary to accept the position of a disciple and a student needing education, requiring to be trained and disciplined in the school of life.

In our day-to-day experience we come to realise that something is wrong somewhere, though we have not been able to find out what is really wrong. The fact that something is not all right comes to the surface of our

experience when we experiment with things. We have to confront persons, problems and duties of various types every day in our life. And when we do our experiments with these facts, we find that something is essentially wrong somewhere because things do not go as we expect them to go. We do not always succeed in life. Mostly we are failures. We are given a rebuff from every corner of our experience and we return disappointed, not knowing what has happened – why we should have failed in spite of our having put forth our best effort. Mostly we complain that we have done everything within our capacity, so how is it that we have failed in our attempts? Why have things gone so badly? Why should we be in this miserable state of affairs in spite of our having honestly tried from the standpoint of the best of our knowledge and power? Well, we might have done our best, but it is not enough if we merely do our best. Our best has to be done properly, in the right manner. The technique of doing is more important than the amount of doing. What is the use of saying we have done a lot? Have we done it properly? The mistake lies here. It may be that we have all done a lot in this world, but very few might have done it properly, in the right spirit, in the right manner, knowing its technique.

The right manner of action is the technique of action; and the technique of action is to be known. If that is not known, even though our action might be continued for years and years and even aeons, we will find ourselves in almost the same condition, stagnating. Why? Really it is true that we have done many things in our life. We have passed through various incarnations. Can we say that we have not done anything? Every one of us has done much,

not merely in this life but in many lives that we have lived. But where are we today in spite of all that we have done? We are nowhere better. We all have a common complaint. My complaints are your complaints also. Whatever is my difficulty, essentially, is your difficulty also. Ultimately, it is all universal suffering and disappointment in spite of everyone having done one's best through ages and ages of incarnations.

This is all because of the fact that this immense amount or quantity of activity has been channelled in a wrong direction. Knowledge was lacking, while effort was plenty. It is like a large engineering feat of building a bridge a few miles long across a wild river. What can a child do, though it may put forth years of efforts to build a bridge across the wild Godavari, Narmada or the Ganges? The child is very honest about it. It wants to build a bridge, and is working for days and days. But it will not succeed in spite of the fact that it has worked hard for days, for months, for years. Nothing will be achieved, because knowledge is lacking. The necessary engineering knowledge is lacking in a child or in a person not trained in that technique. So there is no use merely saying we have worked hard. We must also work hard qualitatively, and not merely quantitatively. Rather, the quality is more important than the quantity. In everything in life, quality supersedes quantity. In the life spiritual, in the life of *sadhana*, in the life of spiritual effort – more prominently, we should say – quality comes first and quantity afterwards. Quality is the knowledge; quantity is the effort.

Now, what is the knowledge that we are required to possess? Let us enter into this question. The knowledge that

we are to attain is the knowledge of the structure of life. What is life made of? How is it constituted, and how is it that we go on repeating the word 'life' without appearing to know anything about it? Who goads us to this fulfilment of the urge to live, though our knowledge of life is next to nothing, almost a nil or a zero? The structure of life, if known, will give us an idea as to the spirit of life and why and how we should live it. And when this is known, we would have known what spirituality is and whether spirituality is to be lived at all – whether it has to become a part of our life at all.

The structure of life is the crux of the matter. What is life made of? It is made up of many things. We open our eyes and cast a wide glance over the ten directions, and see what life is made of. We look up and see the Sun, the Solar System. We look around and see the horizon, the mountains and the rivers and the cities. And we cast a glance nearer and see our people, our family relations, our society, our government, etc. This is life. Things as they themselves are in their own individual status do not constitute life. Life is the relationship that is there among things. Mr. so and so, Mrs. so and so, that particular thing, this object, taken by itself, himself, herself, is not life. That would be the existence aspect of objects, persons, things, etc. But what matters most is the relationship among things. I suffer or enjoy life in accordance with the qualitative character of my relationship with persons and things. People allow me the advantages of the joys of life or inflict pain on me exactly in accordance with what sort of relationship I have with them or they have with me. So for practical purposes, we should say that life is a sort of

relationship rather than the existence as such of persons or things. If everyone and everything is to be merely without any kind of internal relationship, life would be a different thing altogether. But that state of affairs is unthinkable. We have never seen a state of life where relationships are absent. We cannot just be, without establishing some sort of a vital contact with other persons and things.

But what sort of relationship is there between ourselves and others? This relationship among persons and things in life is what we mean by life, because for us life is experience. Life is identical with what we know as experience. Whatever I experience is life for me. "Oh, what a life!" When I make a complaint like that, I mean that the experiences I had are not satisfactory. So my life is my experience. Your life is your experience. Life is experience in its essence.

As relationships seem to be what we mean by life, it is necessary to know what sort of relationships we have – or rather, that we seem to have – among ourselves. We can have two sorts of relationships. One is a scientific relationship, and another is an ethical relationship. When we have a very pleasurable ethical relationship among ourselves, we say, "Life is satisfactory. It is good. It is quite okay." If we think that life is satisfying, it means the ethical relationships are in harmony with what we would like to have for ourselves as our personal experiences. But other than this, there are relationships among the truth or the essentiality behind persons and things. Ethical relationships are not necessarily scientific relationships, because the ethics of life do not always go into the depths of things. The ethics and the morality of life change from time to time in

accordance with the existing conditions at the given moment or time, but the scientific relationships among things cannot change. For example, the relationship of the Earth to the Sun is a scientific relationship. It is not an ethical or moral relationship. Though the planet Earth has some sort of relationship with the solar orb, or the Sun, this relationship is essential to the constitution of the Sun and to the constitution of the Earth, and it has no relevance to moral considerations or ethical concepts. This is to give one among the many instances of what a scientific relationship can be. But the moral relationship is what we are familiar with in human society – the etiquette, the demeanour, the conduct that we exhibit in our practical lives so that there may be a harmonious relationship among ourselves – though in our essentialities, we may differ.

For example, political relationships may essentially be in conflict with one another, but may be practically in harmony with one another, so that there may not be wars every day. That wars are not taking place every day does not mean that there is a harmonious relationship among nations. There is a practical harmony, but an essential discord can be there at the bottom of this apparent harmony. In human society, a similar relationship can prevail – even in families, let alone in wider circles of the society. In a small house people may dislike one another in their heart of hearts for reasons of their own, but somehow they can dine at the same table every day, and even smile and shake hands and enquire, "How do you do?" while inwardly disliking one another. This is social harmony with a disease of inward scientific discord.

We are not merely concerned with ethical or social etiquette in our attempts at understanding what life is. We are concerned with the fundamental essence of life itself, the scientific basis of existence. The laws of the planets – the planetary motion, for example – will not listen to our moral standards or etiquettes of society. If we ask Mother Earth, “Dear Mother, please withhold your force of gravitation for a few minutes until my child safely climbs down from the tree,” she is not going to listen to us. “It may be your child or it may be an emperor, I don’t care. My law of gravitation will work. He will break his leg if he falls,” she says. Scientific laws do not care for etiquette or ethical standards of human society; and life, taken in its wholeness, is a scientific principle. Therefore, we should not be satisfied with a smiling complaisance with the notion that we have understood it because we have wealth to boot, and we are apparently living a life of social approbation and public votes. This will not help us.

Scientific principles govern the world, transcending human morals and ethics. And human ethics and morality assume a meaning and significance only when they are in conformity with the scientific laws existing and operating in the world. We cannot have our own morality and ethics every day, changing from time to time. They have to be in harmony with the existing scientific principles of the cosmos; and then our morality will succeed, and we will be successful in life. But if that conflicts with scientific principles, we may be always smiling, but will be sorry in our hearts.

Hence, we have to be a little serious from now onwards, if we have not already been serious earlier. We should not

take life to be a mere joke or a kind of hobby which is at our command and beck and call. Life is a science by itself. And science is impersonal in its operation. It has no friends and enemies. Scientific laws are equal everywhere, uniformly operating whether in the east or the west, whether in the north or the south, whether on the top or on the bottom. They make no distinction. So, when we understand life, when we try to educate ourselves in the principles of life, we are undergoing a process of education in the highest of sciences conceivable. What can be more serious than a study of science?

Thus, we have paved the ground, as it were, for training the mind for receiving a higher education, a higher knowledge for the highest purpose of life – to be fulfilled, if possible, in this span of life itself so that we shall never once again live unhappily and sorrowfully, as we have been living up to this time. We will not mistake things for what they are not. We will judge things from their own point of view, from the point of view of what they really are, rather than take appearances for reality and live a life of sorrow or *samsara*. *Samsara* is a life of suffering, of tension, of grief in our hearts. *Samsara* may be a show of satisfaction and pleasure outside, but it is essentially a life of grief inside. This is what we mean by *samsara*. It is not that we are crying every moment. We do not see people crying and sobbing every day; yet inwardly they are all unhappy, though they are not wiping tears outside. Therefore, *samsara* can be an outward show of satisfaction and beauty, but inwardly it is bitterness, thorns and suffering. This thorny, tense situation that is inwardly gnawing into our vitals has to be averted by a knowledge of the scientific

principles of life, which alone can be called real knowledge
– a little outline of which I shall try to give in the few days
to come.

Chapter 2

THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Yesterday we were trying to distinguish between the formal relationships among things in terms of social ethics and personal etiquette on a utilitarian basis on one side and, on the other side, a scientific relationship that seems to be there among things. This analysis carries us to the larger question of the structure of the universe – how the world is functioning at all.

What is the constitution of the universe? We have constitutions of our government – there is a president, a prime minister, a cabinet, and there is a system of state government under which we have various officials representing the Centre, functioning in a harmonious manner in consonance with the system established in the form of the central constitution. Likewise, we have a constitution of the universe, a law laid down by the Centre, in accordance with which the whole of creation is to function – not chaotically or discordant with the central mode, but in concordance and in harmony with the central system originally laid down by an enactment of cosmical principles.

On one side of the picture, we see a vast world before us. We have a universe of physical matter which is supposed to be constituted of the *mahabhutas*, or the five elements – the earth principle, water principle, fire principle, air principle and ether principle. These five elements are before us as large objects of perception, called *mahabhutas*, vast objects. They are spread out everywhere.

Wherever we look, we have before us earth, water, fire, air and ether. Most of the objects of the world are also constituted of the earth principle. Anything that is hard to the touch may be said to have the earth principle preponderating in it. According to a principle of permutation and combination of the elements, each element is supposed to have a certain fraction of other elements also within it, so that we do not have a pure earth principle, a pure water principle, a pure fire principle, and so on. Every element has other elements mixed with it in some proportion. Nevertheless, with all these permutations and combinations, the essential elements are only five.

But, the question is not answered merely by an enunciation of these five elements because all these elements stand in the position of objects of perception, and objects naturally have to hang on a subject of perception. There should be a sort of intimate connection between what is seen and the principle of seeing. It is impossible to posit the existence of even objects such as the five elements unless there is a proof for it. The proof for the existence of an object cannot be the object itself because the object does not prove its own existence. Something is brought in as a proof for the existence of objects. How do we know that the world exists? The world itself is not the proof. The proof is always a logical deduction consciously arrived at by processes other than what can be called the objective. A stone is not a proof of its own existence. The proof of the stone's existence is its being perceived.

Generally, we do not believe in the existence of God because God is not perceived. As something is not seen, we conclude it is not there. If something cannot be seen,

cannot be heard, cannot be smelt, cannot be tasted, cannot be touched, what conclusion can we arrive at in regard to it? Perhaps it does not exist. The element of God does not exist, so we can deny His existence very easily inasmuch as there is no sensory proof for the existence of any such principle. If the world is to exist, it has to be sensorily proved. The world exists because it can be seen with the eyes, its sound can be heard by the ears, it can be tasted, it can be smelt, and it can be touched by the tactile sense. So the proof of the existence of the world is not the world itself because if we can conclude that the world exists from its own point of view taken independently, then we can say anything exists from its own point of view, whether it is seen or not.

What is the outcome of this analysis? We know that the five elements – or the world, for the matter of that – exists, not because of the status that the world itself occupies but because its status is recognised by some other principle which cannot be included within the category of objects. If no one is to know the world, there is no saying whether the world exists or does not exist. The existence of an object – let it be a large object like the world – is dependent on a consciousness of the object. When we are not aware of anything, we can say that such a thing does not exist. We have no proof for the existence of super-elemental principles, and therefore we go scot-free from laws that seem to be operating beyond the objects of sense.

Thus, when we have the world of objects on one side, we seem to have another series of facts on the other side which cannot be gainsaid and whose presence has to be accepted automatically together with the acceptance of the

existence of the world of objects. If the world exists, a seer of the world also exists. If a seer of the world were not to exist, the world also need not exist. As they say, the proof of the pudding is the eating thereof.

The existence of the object seems to be in some respect identical with its capacity to be perceived. There was at least one great thinker who boldly proclaimed that to exist is to be perceived. In the West a representative of this school is Bishop Berkeley; and in the East the representatives are known as the Vijñānavādin Buddhists. To exist is to be perceived. If something is not perceived, it does not exist.

Now, perception does not mean merely coming before the organ of sight. Perception means the capacity to come within the cognition of any of the five senses, whether it is sight, hearing, taste, tangibility, or coming within the purview of the olfactory sense. Wonderful is this conclusion that to exist is to be perceived! So if I do not perceive you, you do not exist. This was a very startling and shocking conclusion to the world of philosophers. How can you say that I do not exist merely because you do not see me?

This was a deathblow given to the traditional schools of thought that were parading their knowledge before the birth of Berkeley in the West and before the birth of the Vijñānavādin Buddhists in the East. I can exist even if you do not see me. Then why should not anything exist even if we do not see it? This was another conclusion that could be drawn from this reaction to the school of thought which concluded that the essence of existence is perception. If I can exist even if nobody sees me, why should not anything else exist if nobody sees it? And if your conclusion is that

something cannot be accepted as existent unless it is seen, well, I can say that you also do not exist if I close my eyes.

Here is the beginning of what is known as the Copernican Revolution in philosophy. It is called the Copernican Revolution because it was a kind of change brought about which was equally as shocking as the revelation brought to the world by the scientist Copernicus. He proclaimed to the world that the Earth revolves round the Sun rather than the Sun revolves around the Earth. We thought that the Earth is the centre of creation and that the planets, including the Sun, are only satellites. Not so was the conclusion of Copernicus. We are not the centre of creation. The Earth is a satellite of the Sun and, therefore, the Sun is the centre rather than the Earth. Such a revolution is called the Copernican Revolution in science.

In philosophy also, a revolution was brought about by this tremendous, heartbreaking conclusion to the world of philosophy that if to exist is to be perceived, then it is difficult to live in this world. But we cannot refute this theory. If we cannot accept, or do not want to accept, that to exist is to be perceived, then we have to accede or concede many other facts which we are not prepared to accept ordinarily. If something can exist even if it is not perceived, then anything can exist even if it is not perceived. How can we say that anything can exist even if it is not perceived? But that is the logical conclusion. We cannot refute our own logic. The very same logic that proves our existence even if we are not seen by anybody in the world can also prove the existence of anything else even if it is not seen by anybody.

Well, can we imagine a condition of creation when the Earth was alone without any human being on it? How do we know that the Earth existed when nobody saw it? Somebody should see an object in order that it may be proved to exist. But according to our astronomy, geology, and so on, perhaps the Earth did exist as a boiling mass descended from the orb of the Sun aeons before anything could have lived on it. How can we know that the Earth existed? By inference. We cannot perceive it. By inference from perceived facts we conclude that the Earth ought to have existed even if no living being was crawling on its surface.

So now we come to another proof, called inference. Even if a thing is not perceived, it can exist by the conclusion of inference. Therefore, to exist is not necessarily to be perceived; otherwise, the Earth could not exist when nobody was there to see it. If we were not there, the Earth was also not there. That will be the conclusion. But we are not prepared to accept this funny conclusion. Even if men were not on the surface of the Earth, the Earth did exist many millions of years ago. How do we know this? By inference. Therefore, the proof of the existence of a thing is not necessarily perception; it could also be inference. We can draw the conclusion inferentially that something ought to exist.

Let us not go beyond these two proofs for the time being. There are two proofs at least – perception and inference. Perception tells us that earth exists, water exists, fire exists, air exists and ether exists. But we cannot wash off our hands merely with the theory of perception. We have already accepted that there is something called

inference or logical deduction. If the five elements are to be accepted as existent because they are perceived, can we also draw some other conclusion from inference? What could be prior to the manifestation of the five elements? Just as we concluded that prior to the revelation of life on Earth, Earth could have existed, what could have existed prior to the manifestation of the five elements? We have to conclude this fact by inference alone because this fact is prior to the manifestation of the five elements and, therefore, it lies outside the ken of perceptual logic.

Now, what is the process of inferring the existence of something prior to the manifestation of the five elements? It is the same principle of logic – philologicistic deduction. We have philologicistic logic: All men are mortal, Socrates was a man, and therefore Socrates was mortal. There are two kinds of philologicistic deduction. One is proper and the other is improper. The proper philologicistic deduction is that all men are mortal, Socrates is a man, and therefore Socrates is mortal. Quite agreeable. But an improper deduction is something like this: Queen Victoria is a woman, my mother is a woman, and therefore my mother is Queen Victoria. This is an improper deduction; it is not correct. Just because both are women, it does not mean both are Queen Victoria. So there can be wrong logic and wrong inference that apparently looks all right. Due to such deductions as these, we have many philosophies in the world. They look all right, but they are not really all right.

You have to listen to me carefully. The world of perception is in the position of objects. And we have concluded that objects are known to exist either due to perception or due to an inferential deduction. If an object is

to exist, it must be proved by certain methods of logical deduction. These proofs cannot emanate from the objects themselves. The Earth does not prove its existence either by perception or through inference, and so on. Some other element, some other principle is necessary to bring forth this proof of the existence of something. Whether it is perception or inference, it is an operation of consciousness. It is somebody who is conscious, somebody who is intelligent – someone who is aware, so to say – who concludes perceptually or inferentially that an object exists. Here we are not concerned with the simple object of normal perception; we are thinking of larger objects, like the five elements – or we may say that there is only one object, the whole world of five elements. This large object in the form of the five elements is known to exist by a consciousness. Whether this consciousness knows it perceptually or inferentially is a different matter. It goes without saying that a consciousness seems to be the principle behind the conclusion that the world as a huge object does exist. So we have on the one side the world of objects, and on the other side consciousness. We have a twofold procedure of deduction. One is a deduction of the principle of consciousness, and the other is a deduction of the principle of objects. We cannot escape this twofold principle.

This is why, in India at least, there is a school of thought called the Samkhya, which concluded that there are two realities, the object and the subject. The Samkhya calls it *prakriti* on one side and *purusha* on the other side. *Purusha* is the principle of consciousness, and *prakriti* is the principle of objectivity. The world of objects is *prakriti*, and

the principle of consciousness is *purusha*. The whole universe is nothing but *prakriti* and *purusha*. There are only two things everywhere – something that is known and something that knows, something that is seen, perceived or inferred and another thing that sees, perceives or infers. This is the Samkhya philosophy, the Samkhya doctrine of the duality of the object and the subject. We cannot conceive of anything else anywhere. Whatever is there is something that is seen. But something that is seen is, after all, seen by something else. That something else is the element of consciousness. So we come to a dual experience of the large world of objects, the universe before us, and we ourselves as observers thereof – consciousness and matter, *purusha* and *prakriti*, the seer and the seen. This is the universe of experience.

But the problem does not end here. We are carried forward by an inferential demand of a necessity to bring about a coordination between *purusha* and *prakriti*. We cannot have a large gulf between *purusha* and *prakriti* and be happy. The gulf has to be bridged. A yawning gulf without a bridge between the two terms of relation is indefensible, logically. A gulf cannot be there unless we know that there are two shores containing the gulf. The very fact of the consciousness of difference is proof enough of there being a concordance or a harmony between the two terms of the relation apparently differentiated or separated by the so-called gulf. If the *prakriti* or the world of objects is to be there, and a *purusha* as a centre of consciousness also is to be there, we have to know what the relation between the two is. The whole of life is nothing but this supreme relation between *purusha* and *prakriti*.

Yesterday we were trying to discuss the nature of life and the purpose of life, the spirit of life and the nature of spirituality. This question has brought us now to the other question, the relation between consciousness and matter, this relationship being nothing but life, or the spirit of life.

The relation between *purusha* and *prakriti* is a subject that is discussed in all the scriptures, especially the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads and the Vedanta Shastras. Prakritim puruṣam caiva viddhyanādī ubhāv api (13.19), says the Bhagavadgita. These two principles seem to be eternal. We cannot know when *prakriti* came into existence, and also we cannot know when consciousness came to exist. However much we may go behind and beyond the causal series of the evolution of *prakriti*, we seem to be there as an observer thereof, which is why we cannot say when *prakriti* came into existence; and we also cannot know when consciousness came into existence because however much we may go behind and behind and behind the principle of consciousness, there is a consciousness behind that principle of consciousness. Behind consciousness there is a consciousness of that consciousness, so we are caught up in a logical seesaw. The origin of creation cannot be proved logically because however far behind we go in the causal series, we seem to be there as an observer thereof.

The Samkhya doctrine gives us a clue to this relation between the two terms of relation, consciousness and matter. The evolutionary scheme of the Samkhya is very helpful to us in understanding this mystery. On one side there is a world, and on the other side there is the perceiver of the world. Both these seem to be running parallelly along

two altogether different lines of approach; but these parallel lines seem to meet at a point. How can parallel lines meet? Geometry tells us that parallels never meet, but today science tells us that parallels can meet in infinity. This is something super-geometrical. Infinity is the meeting point of parallel lines. *Purusha* and *prakriti* meet at one point, which is the point of infinity. We have been told that light travels in straight lines, that it never bends; but today scientists tell us that light can bend under certain given conditions, and it does not always travel in straight lines. Therefore, parallel lines do meet, though at a point of infinity.

Now, infinity is a term that we give to incomprehensible positions of things beyond the spatial and temporal limitations of objects. Such a point of infinity is posited by the Sankhya. *Prakriti* and *purusha* meet at a point which is called the *bindu* in tantric terminology. The *bindu*, or the universal point, is a centre wherein the element of consciousness and the element of objects converge into a single subjectivity which is neither material nor conscious in the ordinary sense of the term. The Samkhya tells us this is the principle of *mahat-tattva* commingled with pure Self-consciousness called the supreme *ahamkara*. The *ahamkara tattva* mentioned here by the Samkhya as inseparable from the *mahat* is not the egoism that we are familiar with, but pure indeterminate Self-consciousness.

This is the beginning of creation. This is the *bindu*, this is the *nada*, and this is the *kala* from where the universal reverberation of *omkara* commences. There we have neither *prakriti* nor *purusha*, neither the object nor the

subject, neither matter nor consciousness. What is there, no one knows. That indeterminate something is *nasadasi'nnosadasit*, says the Rig Veda. We do not know whether existence was or non-existence was, whether we were or something was, whether matter was or consciousness was. "Something existed," says the Samkhya, says the Rig Veda, say the scriptures, and this is what has been proclaimed by the masters in Yoga. This is the supreme silence of Truth or Reality.

Here we shut our mouths forever. We speak not, because there is no object to be spoken about and there is no speaker thereof. This silence is the real *mauna* of creation. In the very beginning of the great Smriti of Manu we are told, "Asid asitidam tamobhutam aprajnatam alakshanam, apratargyam avijneyam prasuptamiva sarvatah." Manu commences his Smriti in this manner. Asid asitidam tamobhutam aprajnatam alakshanam: unknown and indefinable darkness prevailed, as it were, in the beginning of things – darkness due to the excess of light. It was not the absence of light that was the cause of darkness; the darkness was due to the excess of light. When light is too much, it looks like darkness. Suppose ten million Suns descend into this hall; it would be like darkness for us. We would simply close our eyes and be dazzled to such an extent that we would see pitch darkness. It is said that when Bhagavan Sri Krishna showed his Visvarupa in the court of the Kauravas, all people closed their eyes and saw nothing, as if it was midnight, but it was the blazing light of tens of millions of Suns which looked like darkness to the eyes of the mortals. So, the *tamas* which Manu describes, and the non-existence which the Rig Veda

speaks of in its Nasadiya Sukta, is not the non-existence of things and not the darkness of the absence of light, but the darkness which is the effect of a transcendent luminosity beyond the capacity of sensory perception, and a non-existence of everything sensorily observed. It is non-existence, yes. But it is non-existence of everything that is objective, external, temporal, spatial, and even what can be called subjective.

Such a mighty mystery is regarded as the beginning of creation. And from that *bindu*, *nada*, *kala*, from that supreme non-existence of all temporal existence, from that supreme light which is the darkness of mortal perception, two lines of evolution began to emanate – on one side the line of objects, and on the other side the line of subjects. The scheme of creation as the object world is known as the five elements of perception; and the scheme of evolution on the other side – as the line of observation or perceptibility, consciousness – is known as the *jiva*. So we have the *jiva-srishti* on one side, and the *jagat-srishti* on the other side. *Samsara* is nothing but the belief in the separability of the object from the subject of perception, and *moksha* or liberation is nothing but rising to the point of that unity of *prakriti* and *purusha* where one does not see, and there is nothing to be seen.

This is to know something from the point of view of the Samkhya, the Vedanta, and scriptural testimony. But we can also know inferentially that the world of perception is not all, and there seems to be an underlying current of union between the perceiving consciousness and the object of perception. The world is contained within consciousness, and that is why it is capable of being known. Knowing is

nothing but the entry of the object into the knowing principle. The object enters into knowledge, or consciousness, and then it becomes known. When there is a union of the object with the subject, the object is known to exist. The world enters our consciousness, and then we say that the world exists.

But the world cannot enter our consciousness, because the world is so large and we seem to be so small. We are Mr. so and so, Mrs. so and so, individuals here, *samsarins*, little percipients, not in a position to contain the large universal scheme of creation; and yet inferentially it appears that our consciousness is capable of containing the large object, if logically we are driven to the acceptance of the fact that the large universe as an object is contained in our consciousness because it is known by us as an object. Though our eyes are so small, they can contain the perception of a large mountain or a huge world in front of us.

This is proof enough of a super-sensible truth that behind the eyes that perceive the large world, there is a principle which peeps through the eyes, but is not contained by the eyes. The vast space can be reflected in a glass of water. The glass is so small, and yet we see a vast panorama of the stellar system in the sky reflected there because of the convergence of light rays in the water contained in a small glass. Because of a peculiar phenomena of perception due to which rays of consciousness converge, as it were, in the retina of the eyes and get focussed on the object outside, we seem to be able to look at a large object though our eyes are so small in their constitution. There is a principle of perception behind the eyes that gives life and

vitality to them, and also gives the confidence in ourselves that we do exist in spite of our not being seen physically. We can close our eyes, and yet know that we are. We can plug our ears and shut all the senses, and yet we can know that we are. So we do not know that we are merely because of the organs of perception. Such a principle behind the sensory activity operates even in the perception of an object outside us. Just as we know that we exist even without the senses operating, we know that the objects exist even without the senses operating.

To give an instance, we have dream perception. The senses do not operate in the dream world, and yet we create objects of sense. We create a temporary dream sense to know the existence of dream objects. The mind is the real perceiver, and not the sense organs. The sense organs are only instruments for the operation of the mind. Even the mind is not the real perceiver, because the mind acts merely as a lens to reflect a light within that is precedent to the mind itself. In deep sleep, for example, the mind does not function, and yet we know that we existed. That was our real nature. That was what we can now conclude as a principle of awareness which focuses itself through the different layers of our personality, through the mind and the senses, and even through the body. The consciousness charges itself like electric force through the mind, through the senses, through the nervous system, through the muscles and even the bones; and then we begin to feel that we are a physical body, we have a nervous system, we have a muscular system, we have a mind, and so on. It withdraws itself in sleep, manifests itself in waking, and partially manifests itself in dream.

Not only that, the consciousness projects itself even beyond our physical body in loves and hatreds. In loves and hatreds, in likes and dislikes, the consciousness projects itself beyond the body and catches objects outside. Then it is that we are affected by the world outside. When a loved object is taken away by bereavement, we get a shock because the consciousness gets a shock. It was temporarily tethered on the object due to affection and the object has been severed by an act of Providence, and then there is a temporary death of the self of consciousness itself, as it were. So we get a shock due to the death of relatives, and so on. When relatives die, why do we get a shock? Somebody is dying; why do we get pained? Why do we feel affected when somebody else dies? It is because that person is connected in our consciousness, and so it is like a tree feeling it has lost part of itself when a branch is cut off. Just as the vitality or the sap of the trunk of a tree manifests itself and flows through every branch and every tendril, every flower, fruit and leaf of the tree, in the tree of *samsara* the principle of consciousness seems to manifest itself through the trunk of the percipient and then project itself forward through the branches of objects which are liked and not liked. *Raga-dvesha* is a ramification of consciousness through the object world.

All this is an inferential proof of the fact that the *purusha* element, or the principle of consciousness, is not limited to the body. It is capable of containing the whole world within itself; and by a peculiar contact that it has established between itself and the world of objects outside, it has got involved in *samsara*. The *samkhya* gives us an analogy. Just as a crystal which has no colour can appear to

have a colour of redness, etc., when a red flower is brought near it, the consciousness appears to have form when form is brought near it. A crystal has no colour. We cannot even see it if it is simply hung in space. But it assumes a colour when a coloured object is brought near it. The whole of the crystal has assumed a redness as if it is charged with redness, as if redness has entered it to its very central substance when the red object is brought close to it, though the colour has not really entered it, and cannot enter it. It always remains outside. It belongs to another object altogether, such as a red flower. So also the character of objects – lovability, beauty, desirability, etc. – cannot belong to consciousness. The consciousness cannot be limited, and yet it appears to be limited on account of its assumption of the character of objects outside due to proximity. As the colour of a flower can be reflected in a crystal, the character of objects can be reflected in our consciousness.

So instead of being merely witnesses of a world of objects, we have become part of the world, just as the crystal can be said to have become part of the colour of the flower. Then we regard ourselves as *samsarins*, caught in *samsara* and misery. “I am nobody. I am a poor person. I am grieved to the core of life.” Just as the crystal can assume the character of the object brought near it, we have assumed the character of the world of *samsara*. Diversity and objectivity are the characteristics of *prakriti*, or the object; and consciousness, which is like a crystal assuming the character and the colour of the object, regards itself as diversified. So we have many people and many objects in the world, each apparently unconnected with the other,

each suffering due to limitation and change due to the process of evolution. Birth and death are the immediate outcome of this apparent separation of consciousness. It is apparent, not real – just as the colour of the crystal is apparent and does not really change the crystal. When the object is taken away from the crystal, the crystal stands pure as it was.

So also the principle objectivity has to be isolated from consciousness. This is called *kaivalya* or *moksha*. *Kaivalya* means *kevalata*. *Kevala* means oneness, alone, aloneness. When we stand alone as *purusha*, as consciousness, independent of association with objects or *prakriti*, we are said to have attained *kaivalya*. This is also called *moksha*. It is called *moksha* because it is freedom. *Moksha* means liberation, *mukti*, complete dissociation from all factors causing bondage. When the *purusha* isolates itself, separates itself from contact with *prakriti*, it is supposed to attain *kaivalya moksha*. We stand in our independent status. We are no more a slave to the enchantment of *prakriti*.

To attain this *kaivalya*, or *moksha*, we have to separate the principle of externality from us. The object is nothing but the element of externality; it is not something substantial. This we will know by a further analysis that we have to carry on in coming days. The principle of externality is what we called the object. It is not substantiality. It is merely externality, something introduced into the true substance of things due to a false association of consciousness with what is not itself. So again we have the difference between the Self and the not-Self. The Self is the principle of consciousness, and the not-Self

is the principle of objectivity or externality. These two principles have been erroneously brought into a juxtaposition, and the world of *samsara* has been created.

Samsara, or the world of tension, has been created on account of the coming together of the two principles of consciousness and externality, *purusha* and *prakriti*. This tension of *samsara* cannot be remedied until we reach the point wherein they converge from where they emanated from the *mahat-tattva* as two parallel lines of evolution. In the Kathonishad there is a description of these two lines of evolution meeting at one point. Indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā, arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ, manasaś ca parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ (1.3.10). Mahataḥ param avyaktam, avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ, puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit: sā kāṣṭhā, sā parā gatiḥ (1.3.11). Beyond the objects of perception there are the subtle essences called the *tanmatras*, the principles of objectivity, which are the causative factors of the five elements perceived by the organs of sense. Beyond the organs of sense are the objects, beyond the objects are their subtle essences, and beyond these essences is the mental principle which cognises these essences of objects. Beyond the principle of the mind there is the principle of understanding, or *buddhi*. The intellect is superior to the mind, the mind is superior to the senses, and the senses are superior to the objects.

Now, with the intellect we have exhausted all our faculties. Beyond the intellect we have nothing with us. We cannot know or see anything transcendent to the power of logical understanding, or *buddhi*. "But," says the Kathonishad, "there is something beyond the *buddhi* – buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ. *Mahan-atma* is the *mahat-*

tattva of the Samkhya, what is called Hiranyagarhha in the Vedanta, or Brahman in the Epics and the Puranas. It is also called the Creative Energy. That is the point where the subject on one side and the object on the other side meet or converge.

Mahataḥ param avyaktam. Beyond the *mahat tattva* is that peculiar Will to create, or the decision to manifest, emanating from an indeterminate principle to which I made reference as mentioned in the Nasadiya Sukta of the Rig Veda. *Avyakta*, unmanifest, is the principle of Ishvara or the Ishvaratattva, the principle of God, the Will to create, wherein is the explanation for all things. When we reach the seed of the tree, we have an explanation for all that we see as a manifested tree. When we reach this Supreme *mahat-tattva* and *avyakta*, which are the seed of this vast creation, we have a final answer to all our questions and a solution to all our problems.

But beyond still, beyond this causative principle of *avyakta*, is the Absolute. This is called the ultimate *purusha* or the Purushottama. It is called Purushottama because it is transcendent *purusha* and not merely the consciousness involved in creation. Dvād imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cakṣara eva ca, kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭhastho'kṣara ucyate (Gita 15.16). Uttamaḥ puruṣas tva anyah paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ (Gita 15.17). This Paramatman, or the Purushottama, is beyond both *prakriti* and *purusha*. It is not the *purusha* involved in *samsara*, and it is also not the *prakriti*, the objective principle. It is the supreme regulative order of the universe wherein the constitution of all creation is laid down once and for all. It is difficult to name

it, designate it; and until we reach that state, we are *samsarins*.

There is no use asking questions until we reach that state. No question can be answered until the original, fundamental law is studied – just as in law or legal practice we have one law regulating another law, one thing determining another principle. If a Patwari comes and asks for revenue, we can ask him, “Why do you ask revenue from me?” “It is the Sub-collector's order.” “But why did the Sub-collector order this?” “It is the District Collector's order.” “Why did he order this?” “It is the order of the Chief Secretary of the State Government.” “But why did he order this?” “It is according to the constitution of the State Government.” “But who made the State Government's constitution?” “It is in accordance with the constitution of the Central Government.” “Who made it, and why should it have been made in that way?” Then we go to the very principle of the enactment of law itself. Why should the law be enacted in that manner, or at all? This is the theory of law and the principle of law in jurisprudence. Likewise, in spiritual jurisprudence we have a tracing of the principle of law from the lower law to the higher law, and we cannot understand the action of a particular representative of the law or the constitution unless we study the whole constitution. The fundamental laws have to be studied first.

And so, before the fundamental laws are studied, there is no use asking any question. “Why does God create the world?” “Why do I suffer?” “Why did my mother die?” These questions cannot be answered until the original constitution is studied. According to that, everything is perfectly all right. And, when that Supreme Centre, or the

basis of the manifestation of things, is studied and reached by the consciousness within us, we are said to be liberated. Liberation is nothing but the recession of the effect into its cause, the returning of the object to the subject – or to put it more precisely, the returning of both the object and the subject to that point from where they emanated. God is the explanation for all things. In one word – the word ‘God’, ‘Ishvara’ or ‘the Absolute’ – we have answered everything and said everything. God is. That is the final answer to all things. That is the liberation of the soul; that is the freedom from *samsara*. That is *kaivalya moksha*, for the attainment of which we have to practice the spiritual discipline called *sadhana*.

Sadhana, or spiritual training, is nothing but the attempt of the soul to gradually free itself from all the principles of objectivity, so that it may enter into that original principle of Universality – *mahat-tattva*, *Ishvara-tattva*, God-consciousness, or the Absolute. When that state is reached, we will see the world with one glance. With one glance, we can see everything within and without. That is the state of God, *mahat-tattva*, the Creative Principle. Now we have to see things by succession, one after another. If we cast a glance over things here, we see one thing after another thing. But there we have a simultaneous knowledge of all things. A mere glance is an instantaneous knowledge of everything that can be anywhere at any time. Past, present and future are all laid before us. The entire Mahabharata and Ramayana, which took place long ago, and the beginning of the Solar System and the stars – everything can be seen as if it is taking place just now. Not only the past, but also the infinite future which is going to

be, is also seen as an eternal present, as Arjuna was supposed to have seen the whole panorama of creation – past, present and future – in the Visvarupa. Puruṣa evedaṁ sarvaṁ yadbhūtaṁ yacca bhavyam (Puruṣa Sukta 2): Whatever was past and whatever is going to be, all that is *puruṣa* only. In that supreme *puruṣa*, or Puruṣottama, all that is commingled. So when we reach that ocean of Puruṣottama, we know everything that was, right from the beginning of creation until *pralaya*, the end of creation – whatever is going to be, and whatever is at present. All this is given to us as an *amalaka* on the palm – *hastamalakavat*. As we can see something kept on our palm so clearly, we can see the whole of creation – past, present and future – as an eternal present, and not as something that took place or something that is yet to take place. We see it as it is just now. To Ishvara’s eyes, the Mahabharata is a present. It is not a past event. And all those who are going to be born in the future are also a present to him. He sees them as if they are just now. There is no evolution, no involution there. There is no object, no *prakṛiti*, and no involved *puruṣa* to see them. Eternity and infinity get fused into a single focus of Universal Presence, *kevala astittva*, That Which Is.

The moment this is brought into our consciousness, we get liberated even here itself. This is what we call *jivanmukti*. Being here in this very world, we can live a life of freedom. There is no such thing as this world and the other world for a state of liberation because this and that are spatial distinctions, just as past and future are temporal distinctions. The spatial difference of this and that or here and there gets negated, even as the temporal distinction of

past and future gets negated in an eternal presence and an infinite here.

It is very difficult to conceive this in our little brain, but this is the object of our supreme meditation. We will be simply thrilled even to think of this Reality. Our hair will stand on end. Hunger and thirst get quenched; it will appear as if nectar is flowing through our throat, and we will be in ecstasy of joy beyond comprehension. Here we will stop speaking altogether, and we will be an eternal *mauni*, forever. When God enters the *jiva*, nothing remains to be said or done. We will become *kritakritya*, *praptaprapya* and *jnatajneya*. Everything that is to be known is known, everything that is to be done is done, and everything that is to be obtained is obtained. This is perfection.

Wonderful is this goal which is ahead of us still. Though it is eternal and infinite, it looks as if it is in the future to us, just as the waking state looks like the future to the dreamer, though it is enveloping the dream condition from all sides, within and without. So to our mortal individual consciousness, God-consciousness, *moksha* or *kaivalya* appears to be a future event to take place, though it is already enveloping us within and without, from all sides, like the ocean.

Therefore, we have to be awake to this birthright of ours, to this original, primeval status which is our own, and not somebody else's. This awareness which is instilled into our hearts can make us healthy, wealthy, prosperous, powerful, and most blessed in this world. I am giving you the description of a condition which is not merely to take

place in a far-off future, but is a condition which can come to you even today itself, if only you want to have it.

Chapter 3

RECOGNISING THE INDEPENDENT STATUS OF THINGS

From the point of creation, two channels of force emanate in two different directions. One is the channel of objects, and the other is the channel of subjects – or, we may say, the channel of the five elements and the things of the world on one side, and the *jivas*, or the individual souls, on the other side. Just as we have the five elements – earth, fire, water, air and ether – on the objective side of creation, on the subjective side there are the physical body, the sense organs, the five *pranas*, the mind, the intellect, and many other mysteries that can be discovered within our own selves.

Now, inasmuch as both the objective side and the subjective side have come from one single source, they naturally partake of a similar characteristic between themselves. They are like an elder brother and a younger brother, or we may call them twins if they are to be regarded as having arisen simultaneously. We may call the objective world the elder brother, if we wish, because the objective world is so vast and so incomprehensible and unmanageable to the individual souls. However, whatever be the truth of it, there are two lines of approach: one external, another internal. The external is the vast world. The internal is the individual soul.

As I said, inasmuch as both these principles, the objective and the subjective, proceed from a single parent, they have common characteristics. Whatever the world has

as its essential quality or character is also present in us as individual souls. And whatever is within us is also correspondingly present in the outer world. This is the reason why there is a reaction between the individual and the object. The reason why we are able to see the world and react to the world, and why the objects set up a stimulus of reactions in respect of our perceptions, is due to the fact that there is something common between us both. If the world was entirely dissimilar in character to our personality, we would not even be able to see it or know that it exists at all. What is common between us? What is the factor that equally underlies us both? This is a very crucial and decisive factor in our daily experience.

Though it is true that the fact of our perception of the world proves the possibility of there being a common current between both, this common current is never seen, never experienced in our waking life throughout our existence in this world. We never see or experience objects as they are. We have experiences of a different kind altogether. We live in a world of stimuli. 'Stimulus' is a peculiar term that we use to designate a set of reactions produced by objects on the one side and subjects on the other side. It is difficult to define it in a better manner. Some sensation is generated within us by the very presence of things, and this sensation is the effect of the stimulus generated by the function of a particular object in the world.

There is a magnetism, or a power, emanating from everything in this world. Everything is a magnet. There is inorganic magnetism, and also what is known as animal magnetism. This magnetic force is nothing but the way in

which the energy is automatically released from bodies by their mere presence. Sometimes this magnetism is very intense, and sometimes it is very mild. Intense magnetism can be seen in such things as a loadstone, or what is generally known as a magnet. It is not only the magnet that has the power of magnetism; everything has that power in some proportion and in some intensity. But, even as the fire principle is present in all objects, even in wood and stone, yet we see a matchstick manifesting it in a greater proportion and intensity than a stone. Though the element of power or magnetism is present in different proportions in different objects, it is more manifest in certain things, which we call magnets. It may be a horseshoe magnet or any other magnet.

This magnetism is nothing but the call of the object for a particular purpose. It is not a purposeless action or reaction. It is a summons of the object in respect of other objects in the world. Every object calls every other object towards itself – ‘Come to me’ – as one sibling calls another sibling because of their intimate relationship or blood relation. The whole universe is such a magnetic mass, energised to its core, and its power is incomprehensible. We know what a small atomic mass of matter contains as its potential. It can destroy the whole world. If a small quantum of matter can contain so much energy as to be able to demolish life on Earth, what would be the total energy of the whole cosmos?

This energy is hidden latent, and not always manifest outside. It is manifest only when consciousness rises to its status of self-consciousness. The more we rise in our comprehensiveness of consciousness, the more are we in a

position to release energy from ourselves. Yogis are supposed to be very powerful. The power comes not by the possession of instruments or implements in their hands, but by the manifestation of this potent force within themselves – the magnetic energy which everyone has but which manifests under certain given circumstances alone.

What I mean to say is that the whole universe is a mass of energy and power, indicating the fact that the objects of the world are intimately related to one another. This relation of objects among themselves is the cause for the release of energy or magnetism in things. It is a pull or push felt by objects on account of the presence of something else, external to them.

Each one of us here produces such a magnetism. We have an aura around us. Each person has an aura which feebly manifests itself in low-pressure individuals, but which releases itself in high potencies in high-pressure individuals. This high or low pressure of individuality is the result of the proportionate release of consciousness force in oneself by a peculiar art or technique which we know as yoga.

What we call yoga is nothing but the process of the release of this consciousness force within ourselves. This immense universal magnetic force that is hidden, latent and potent in every person and every object is released by a peculiar, uncanny, veiled, unknown process. The process is nothing but the return of consciousness to its original status in which it was when it primarily manifested itself or was released from the point of creation. *Jivas* could be said to have been in a particular condition when they were originally in the point of creation. Things by themselves are

different from things as they are in relation to other things and other persons. This is the difference that I drew between ethical or social relationship and primary or scientific relationship during our first session. We are coming to the point again as an important subject for discussion.

Things in themselves are difficult to perceive, and things as they are perceived are different from things as they really are. We have seen this distinction drawn in common experience among persons, human beings. A person himself or herself, independently, as he or she is individually when alone in their room, is different from a person appearing in public or society. When we are in public or in the external atmosphere of society, we behave in a different way than when we conduct ourselves independently. When we are absolutely alone, unknown, unseen and unobserved, we think and feel in a different manner than when we exhibit our conduct in public life, for reasons known to everyone. This law is perhaps applicable to everything, every object in the world. The thing as it is in itself – the thing in itself, the object as such, the person by himself or herself – is different and is more difficult to study than the same object or person in relation to other persons and things.

When a person is placed in the presence of an object, a new atmosphere is created. When we are in a congregation or a parliament, in a society of persons or bodies, we create an atmosphere that is a little different from the atmosphere we have in our own selves. The reason is that there is a mutual reaction between ourselves and the other persons or objects outside in public, while there is no such reaction

when we are alone. This reaction is the cause of our pleasures and pains. The stimulus that is set up by objects disturbs our way of thinking, and we begin to think in terms of the relation that we have already established with the other persons and objects outside, and not independently. Therefore, we have a biased view of things on account of the individual position that we are placed in society. The practice of yoga becomes difficult because of our inability to understand the cosmic relationship in which we are placed as different from the individual or social relationship in which we are usually placed in day-to-day life.

While the two channels of the expression of force, the subjective and the objective, are one at the point of creation, they are different when they ramify themselves into these two channels. This is a matter for deep meditation and analysis by every student of yoga. As I mentioned in the previous session, the object, whatever be its nature, whether inanimate or animate, is a content of our consciousness, on account of which we are able to see or perceive the objects. The entire object is contained in consciousness; and on account of this capacity of the object to enter into the activity of our consciousness, we begin to be aware of an object or a world outside. This is what we call reaction.

To give an analogy, when sunlight falls on an object, the object is illuminated. We begin to see an object outside in sunlight. The object is visible to us on account of the rays of the Sun falling on it. Now, the object itself does not shine. What shines is the light rays of the Sun that have fallen on the object. There is a difference between the light of the Sun

and the object that is illuminated; they are not the same. A pot that is put in broad daylight shines, and we say there is a pot in front of us. What we actually see is the illumination shed by sunlight over the surface of the pot. If the sunlight is withdrawn – when the Sun sets, for example – the pot itself becomes invisible. The pot has no character of shining and, therefore, it is not in a position to be seen or perceived by the percipient unless there is an associating factor – sunlight. But when we look at an object, we do not make a distinction between the light and the object. There is a superimposition, as it is called, between the light and the object. The object is shining, we say. The object does not shine; it is the light that is shining, but because we are unable to distinguish between the light and the object, we make the mistake of asserting that the object is shining.

Likewise, when we begin to see an object we make the assertion, “I see the object.” Now, seeing is nothing but a state of experience or an operation of consciousness. Unless our consciousness operates, seeing and knowing are impossible. If we know the existence of an object in front of us, it means there is consciousness operating in front of us. What we are conscious of is not the object as such, but the operation of our own consciousness in respect of the object.

In philosophical terminology, we are given a description of the process by which we become aware of the object outside. Similar to the comparison that I gave of the relation between the sunlight and the object that it illumines, we may apply this analogy to the perception of an object. Just as the light of the Sun falls on the object, our consciousness proceeds from us and falls on the object, envelopes it, and takes its shape, in the same way that

sunlight may be said to take the shape of the object in order that it may become an object of perception or knowledge. Our consciousness goes outside through space and in time, envelopes the object, and makes it shine.

Now, this shining is different from the shining of the object by the light of the Sun. We can conceive of an object even by closing our eyes. We can have mental objects, as we have physical objects. The process of perception is, therefore, purely a consciousness process. The movement of our own intelligence begins through an invisible process of activity in the medium of space and time, all which is on account of the fact that the object outside and the subject within have come from the same source.

Yoga practice is the name that we give to the process of this coming together of the object and the subject, and the experience of the subject in relation to the object in the manner in which it would have been had the experience been given to us at the point of creation itself. This is what the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, for instance, mention as the establishment of consciousness in itself – *tadā draṣṭuh svarūpe avasthānam* (1.3). The establishment of consciousness in itself is only a name that we give to the process of the return of the object to itself as pure subjectivity in its universal connotation.

Samsara, or earthly existence, the world of pleasures and pains, is the world of tensions created by the reaction between the subjects and the objects. To judge an object as it is, is different from the way in which we judge an object as it appears to us. When we look at an object, we do not look at the object as it is. The object means something to us. The meaning that we read in an object disturbs our correct

apprehension of the object. We can never see an object as it is by itself. When we look at a tree, we see it as our tree or not our tree, as a tree in our garden or a tree in somebody else's garden, or a weed that grows in our field, and so on. We look at a person as our friend or not our friend, as related to us positively or negatively, as known to us or unknown to us, and so on. Whenever we look at things, we project a personal relationship in respect of them, and cannot look at a thing as it is in itself – just as, as I mentioned a few minutes before, we are a different in ourselves from the way in which we look or appear to others.

This rule applies to every object. If we can learn to look at things as they are rather than look at them in the way in which they appear to our minds due to the predisposition of the mind, we would be independent in the real sense of the term. That is called *svarajya*, or independence, which is the mastery that we gain over our mind rather than social acceptance of it in a tentative manner.

We are not absolutely independent in any respect. We are totally dependent on many things for our very existence. Nobody in this world can be wholly independent. The entire independence that we are asking for is possible only in the Absolute Spirit. Until the achievement of the Absolute Spirit, true independence is not possible.

The study of consciousness is really the study of yoga. It also involves the study of the object. Both mean one and the same thing. Thus, when we study the subject of consciousness and study the object as independent from each other, we come a cropper. We do not know what we are speaking of, and how this could be achieved. All these

subtle matters are difficult to explain logically and scientifically. They are better explained by analogies, comparisons, etc.

I shall give an example as to what a scientific object is, independent of an ethical object or a social object. Take a human being. If we ask who this person is, the answer would be, "He is my father; he is my brother; he is my friend; he is my colleague; he is my boss; he is my subordinate." These are the ways in which we generally describe a person. But is this really the person in himself? Is he nothing if he is not a father, a brother, a friend or an enemy? Suppose a person has no child; we do not call him a father. The idea of father is gone automatically when there is no child. But yet that person has some characteristics independent of being a father. He may not be a boss, he may not be a subordinate, he may be an only child, perhaps he may not be a friend or an enemy of anyone, and he may not occupy any status in society. It is very difficult to always explain the relationship of a person in terms of external contact, but this is what we try to do. We are habituated to giving this slipshod description. This is the social description of a thing, and not the scientific description.

The scientific description of a person is the description in terms of a characteristic which is inherent in that person. If you are not a president, if you are not a prime minister, if you are not a rich man, if you are not a poor man, if you are not anything that can be described by society, what are you? Suppose you are in the wilderness, in the thick of a jungle, and nobody sees you, nobody knows you, and nobody wants you. You will have a characteristic of your own, independently. When you are dispossessed of everything,

you still exist as a person. That personality of yours, that body of characteristic in you, existing and subsisting independent of external relationship, is the scientific description of your personality.

The object as it is independently is incapable of observation because the very process of observation disturbs the activity of the object. In a laboratory there is no other way of observing a thing except through an instrument. Whatever be the subtlety of our observation in a laboratory, it is all dependent on the structure of the instrument that we make use of. But if the very presence of the instrument disturbs the presence of the object, the object's essential characteristic cannot be known. They say that even at this moment of advanced scientific discovery [1972], the actual characteristic of the inner content of an atom is not known. What is it made of, and how does it behave? What is the velocity with which it moves? All this has not yet been known or seen, because the very instrument with which they are trying to observe the moments of the contents of the atom disturbs the movement of the atoms. Likewise, the way in which we perceive the object disturbs the very presence of the object, so that the object as such cannot be known. Hence, no one in the world can be omniscient. *Sarvajnattva* is not given to us. Nothing can be known entirely by its physical structure.

But there is a superior, super-mental method of knowing things as they are – by not disturbing their existence, by not calling them by name, by not looking at them as external things, but by looking at them as they are in themselves. You know very well, if I adore you, regard you, respect you from your own point of view, you will be

more friendly towards me than if I judge you from my point of view. You are a person of some status from your own point of view. Everyone has a certain status of his own or her own. If we take the point of view of that person's status from his or her own standpoint, there is a greater possibility of amicable relationship than if we judge that person from our point of view.

Suppose we have a subordinate or a servant. If we always make that person feel that he or she is a servant, and whenever we summon that person we give the impression that he or she is our underling; that is one way of treating a person. But suppose, though the person is our servant or a subordinate, we do not give the impression that he or she is a servant or a subordinate, and we speak in an affectionate manner as if he or she is our equal, we will know what difference it makes. Perhaps that servant will do more work for us than if we treat that person as a servant. This is because the status of the person has been raised by our recognising his or her independence.

Everything in this world is independent, essentially speaking. No one is dependent on another person or thing from the ultimate point of view, but they look like dependents on account of a social relationship in which these objects or persons are entangled. Everyone asks for independence. No one wants to be dependent. No one wants to be a servant, but everyone wishes to be a boss. It is humorously said that a person went to a Guru and asked, "Maharaj, who is superior, Guru or disciple?" The Guru replied, "Guru is superior." "Then, make me a Guru," the person said. Likewise, humorously though, we would like to be absolutely independent in ourselves, free from all

external forms of dependence, because essentially we are not related in space and in time. As space and time did not exist prior to creation, and came only afterwards, we want to assert our nature which was prior to creation because that is the ultimate reality of things.

The process of yoga, to put it in simple language, is the art of recognising the independent status of things and not submitting objects to subordination to ourselves in any manner whatsoever. Even a mouse does not want to be subordinate to us. It has its own independence. It does not want to be caught. Nothing is so low, so despicable, as to ask for, voluntarily, submission to others.

Insult is the highest punishment that we can imprecate upon a person. We may deny food, we may cut off salary, we may not sanction their leave; it does not matter. But if we insult them it is worse than anything else because their independence is affected. That is called insult. We deny the independence that the person's ego is affirming. The highest punishment that we can inflict upon a person is the denial of their ego. This ego, or the principle of self-affirmation, is a distorted form of the supreme absolute independence inherent in the Atman, or the Self of all beings.

It is from this point of view that the sage Yajnavalkya said, as recorded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: *na vā are sarvasya kāmaya sarvam priyam bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati* (4.5.6). All loves are Self loves. We do not love an object or a person, really speaking, because they are conditioned by the intensity of the manifestation of our Atman. All love is conditioned. We do not have unconditioned love in this world. Therefore, all

satisfaction or pleasure that we derive from objects or other persons in the world are also conditioned accordingly. It is conditioned in the sense that it is determined by the extent to which our consciousness has pervaded that object.

There is a story. A poor man was crossing a river with his wife and five children. He had to vacate his house and go to some other place by crossing a stream. On his head he was carrying a trunk containing gold and other valuables, and his wife was clinging to him with their five children on her shoulders. When they were in the middle of the river, the water started rising. His wife said, "There is danger. I cannot bear the weight of these five children on my shoulders. I am going." As they were in the middle of the river, they could neither go this way nor that way. Either way they were finished. "Throw off one child," the man said. "Four children will do." It is very difficult to throw a child into the water, but as it was a question of life and death she had no other alternative than to close her eyes and throw a child down. The story goes that one by one all the children were thrown into the river, and only the man, his wife and his trunk were left. After sometime she said, "Now, even when there is no load on me, I cannot cross. My feet are giving way. I am going." She caught hold of him tightly. He was bearing her weight and the weight of his trunk. He said, "It doesn't matter. If we are alive we can earn our bread by our sweat," and he threw the trunk down. But the water still kept rising, and finally he began to think, "Now we are only two. What to do? If I survive, I can take another wife." He pushed his wife into the water, and finally he alone swam across, having no thought of anything except himself. This is a crude illustration of how

the selfishness of a person operates, indicating that there is something speaking from within, though in a distorted manner.

The *atma-kamatva* can be of two kinds: love of the bodily self and love of the true Self. The love of the bodily self is a spatio-temporal expression of the love of the true Self. There is a vast ocean within us, but that ocean is not seen. It seems that a little tap is connected to the ocean, and though the pressure of the entire ocean is behind the tap, it is not seen on account of the consciousness becoming restricted to the flow of water through the tap. This tap is the ego. But the ego is not merely like a tap, because through the tap we have only real water flowing and nothing else, but here things come in a distorted form through the ego. The ego is not merely a limitation of the ocean behind it, but a distortion of it. It is coloured, it is fragmented, and something else altogether, totally different from the original, comes through the ego. This is what we call the Asura in Puranic language – the Rakshasa. Though Rakshasas have come from God only, they assume a different character altogether due to the distortion of personality through the operation of the *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* – in very violent proportions.

The practice of yoga, therefore, involves a graduated process of eliminating these Rakshasa or Asuric *vrittis* of *rajas* and *tamas* in ourselves, by which we also simultaneously eliminate the dependence that we feel in respect of other persons and objects, and give up selfishness, or the assertion or affirmation of the ego, and begin to feel sympathy towards all creation. This automatic sympathy that we recognise in the world outside is a very

great advance that we make in the spiritual path. It is a step that we take towards the recognition of our original personality, prior to the point of creation.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali particularly give us a very beautiful description of the psychology of the process. The psychology of the process is a gradual elimination of the encrustations that seem to have grown over our personality. The bodily, sensory, *pranic*, mental and intellectual fungi that have grown over us have to be shed, and the essential luminosity of light that is within us is to be directly experienced, and not indirectly felt through these external apparatus of the senses, mind and intellect.

The affirmation of the ultimately real element in things is the art of meditation in yoga. This is to assert and to recognise the principle of the independence in things, which is the scientific status that each person occupies. To bring back to our memory the analogy of what this scientific status is, we have to recognise a person or an object from its own point of view rather than from our point of view. This is the highest love that we can evince towards others. Love is not embracing, shaking hands, weeping, or emotional outbursts. It is a philosophical attitude that we endow and develop in ourselves in respect of other persons and things. This is most difficult to achieve in life because we cannot be philosophical in our attitudes in respect of others. We always treat others as subordinates, as adjectives to us, a qualification. "What does it mean to me," is the way in which we read the personalities of others and the structure of objects. Why should anything mean something to us? Does it not exist independently by itself,

even if it does not mean anything to us? And what do we mean to others?

This is what is implied in the Mahabharata, that crest jewel of ethical teaching given by Vyasa: Do unto others as you would be done by. You should never conduct yourself in a manner in which you would not like that very same conduct to be shown to you. If you tell a lie, you should at the same time consider whether you would like a lie to be told to you. If somebody tells a lie to you, do you like it? Then why do you tell a lie? Why do you grab others' property? Would you like your property to be grabbed by somebody else?

The ethical standard is to be judged by its capacity for universalisation. If a principle can be universalised, we may regard it as the highest ethical standard. Take the example of whether it is good or bad to tell a lie. If we want to test this principle, we just universalise it. If everyone in the world were to tell only lies, would it be all right? Not one person will tell the truth; everyone will lie. Then the world will not go on. Because we would not like lying to be universalised, lying is not an ethical standard. Suppose everyone in the world is a thief; will it be all right? Theft cannot be universalised. Suppose everyone in the world is incontinent; will it be all right? Incontinence cannot be universalised. Therefore, any principle that is capable of universalisation can be regarded as a standard.

But there is no such thing as an ultimately universal ethical standard. When it assumes the status of universality, it goes beyond morality. The ultimate reality is supermoral. It is not moral or ethical in the ordinary sense of the term. When we become spiritual, we rise above the moral

standard. The saint's conduct, the sage's behaviour, is not merely ethical or moral behaviour. It is a metaphysical, a philosophical or a spiritual attitude incapable of comprehension by the ordinary mind.

We have to rise to this level in yoga. To attain this, we have to withdraw our relationships which are of a social character, a empirical type, and accept the pure scientific status in ourselves. This is *Atmattva*. The highest scientific principle is the *Atman*. That is the Self of all beings. To recognise the independence of a person or a thing is to recognise the selfhood of that person or object. How would we regard or respect the selfhood or the essentiality of a person or a thing? It is by, for a moment of time, entering into the feeling of that person. If we can think as that person thinks, feel as that person feels, exist as that person would exist, we have not only demonstrated the highest ethical standard in the world, but also done the greatest good to our own self by rising to a spiritual level of judgment and recognition.

Yogic adepts became masters of forces due to this technique of the recognition of the value in things. The more we become intimate with a person or a thing, the more is the power or the control that we gain over that person or thing. And the highest intimacy is non-separability. When we become inseparable from an object, we have asserted the highest reality over it. The more we become distinct from that object, the less is the control that we have over it. *Sarvaṃ tam parādād yo'nyatrātmano sarvaṃ veda* (2.4.6), says Yajnavalkya in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. To the extent we regard things as outside us, to that extent we have no control over them.

They shall flee from us, they shall run away from us, they shall disregard us. And there shall be bereavement, destruction and death; and transmigration, the process of birth and death, cannot be avoided.

Thus, yoga is an affirmation of the independent status of things. This is what all the scriptures describe in various ways, in different phrases and languages. The independent status of things is the status that we occupy in our own self in regard to our own self. This is the metaphysical status, the philosophical or the spiritual status. This is the scientific relationship of things, independent of the made-up or the concocted, artificial relationship that we manufacture for the sake of practical convenience in our day-to-day life. That means to say, we have to become very honest and not hypocritical in our conduct. We must be honest in the sense that we must speak and act in a manner which is in consonance with what we think and feel in our hearts.

The objects and the persons in the world have a capacity to feel in the subliminal level. There is a level of our personality which is deeper than the conscious level, and we begin to feel, unconsciously though, the presence of a factor that is deeper than the conscious level. Often we are automatically attracted or repelled even without our conscious mind functioning. There is hatred at first sight, just as there is love at first sight. Suddenly we are repelled by a person or an object, without knowing the cause thereof. The reason is that there is a prehensive or subtle faculty of feeling in ourselves which is deeper and more profound than our conscious level, and that is the factor of

unity in us overcoming the pressure of the surface activity of the conscious mind.

All this is very difficult to understand, and more difficult to practise. Yoga is not a joke. No one has succeeded in it. It is very difficult to succeed, and we cannot see God-realised souls in large numbers because self-control is the hardest of things to achieve. No one can be a master of oneself and, therefore, no one can be a master of others. Unless we have subdued ourselves, we cannot subdue other people and other things. We want mastery over everything, while we are slaves of our own passions and prejudices. *Kama, krodha, lobha*, the erroneous ways of judging things, psychological entanglements and tensions, all harass us so much from within that we are far from the demand or the requirement of the yogic practice. The practice of yoga is a sacrifice of the whole life. It is not a hobby that we have in our life, for a few hours of the day. It is a total dedication of our personality right from the beginning, from top to bottom, and there is nothing else for us to do. And when this is undergone as a process of discipline, we become different persons altogether, even in our social life.

At this level of profundity of knowledge, the Guru's instructions are very essential and, I have to reiterate, in matters supersensible we should not take the law in our own hands. In many matters which are not amenable even to logical understanding, the scripture is the guide; the masters and the adepts who have trodden the path are guides, because at this present moment we cannot see the dangers that are ahead of us. There are pitfalls and hazards that we have to face on the path of yoga. Because yoga is a

process of self-control, a withdrawal of the social relationship that we establish in an empirical manner, and the assertion of the original scientific, philosophical and spiritual status of things, we have to undergo a process of dying altogether. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to say, "Yoga is dying to live." To live in Eternity, we have to die to the temporal process. Thus, we have to become very strict in controlling and subduing ourselves in thinking and understanding the objects of the world in their proper perspective, and never mistake things for what they are not.

The process of yoga is also the process of spirituality. It is to recognise the spirit in things, as I said on the very first day. To recognise the spirit or the Atman in things, the Selfhood in things, the scientific status in things, is also to recognise the highest reality, not only in ourselves but in all creation. For this, the first and foremost thing that we have to do is to employ every method possible to subdue the passions within us. The Rakshasa *vrittis*, or the Asuric, demoniacal features within us, have to be put down by the force of self-discipline, by the means of *japa*, concentration, meditation, self-analysis or *vichara*, study of scriptures, service of the Guru, and beyond everything, an ardent longing for the liberation of the spirit. Unless we actually manifest in ourselves an honest yearning for freedom or *moksha*, the power to subdue ourselves, the power of self-discipline, cannot come to us.

The most difficult of things is self-discipline. We can discipline others but we cannot discipline ourselves because there is no means of controlling ourselves, while there are methods of controlling others. We have laws and regulations to subdue other people, but what is the law and

regulation that we have to employ in controlling or subduing ourselves? Nothing. There is no instrument conceivable. The mind itself is the master and the slave. It has to control itself by methods employed by itself, varying in different proportions at different times in the process of its evolution.

Ultimately, we have no other duty in the world than to subdue ourselves for the sake of mastery. The highest achievement, the greatest fulfilment in life is the consequence or the result of the greatest relinquishment, the greatest renunciation. The more we renounce, the more we practice self-abnegation, the more we practice austerity or *tapas*, the greater is our power and the more is the control that we can exert on things. And finally, to the extent we have achieved mastery over ourselves, we have achieved mastery over the world also. The highest yoga is supreme mastery – supreme Self-mastery – and in this mastery of the Self, we have at once also mastered the whole world. This is because, as I said, the world and the Self are two emanations from the same source. When one is subdued, the other is automatically subdued. They are parallel lines of movement. When there is Self-control, there is also world-control. When there is Self-knowledge, there is also world-knowledge. When there is Self-realisation, there is also world-realisation. All these things take place simultaneously; they are not two different things.

Remember that the world and the subject have proceeded as two channels from the same source, so that when we touch one element, the other elements are automatically touched. When we touch one branch of a tree, it is like touching the whole tree. When we touch our

finger, we have touched our body. Similarly, when we touch the Self, we touch the whole cosmos. It is the switchboard of the whole universe.

You may ask why the Self should be touched rather than the object. Why do we not try to control the object outside rather than the Self, the subject? The reason is that the character of reality is selfhood, and not the object. The Self is incapable of externalisation into objectivity, inasmuch as its nature is consciousness. *Chit*, or *chaitanya*, is the nature of the Self, and it cannot be externalised. However much we may differentiate it into the object, it refuses to become differentiated because it is the nature of consciousness to maintain the status of Selfhood, *Atmattva*.

Therefore, the Supreme Atman is called the Paramatman. The Paramatman is another name that we give to the Atman of the cosmos. While the individual self is called the *jiva*, the Supreme Self is called the Paramatman, the Oversoul or the Overself. By control of the *jiva*, we enter into the Atman of the individual. By the entry of consciousness into itself in the affirmation of the Atman within, it has simultaneously entered into the Atman of the cosmos. So, *Atma-sakshatkara* is the same as *Paramatma-sakshatkara*; Self-realisation and God-realisation mean one and the same thing. Self-discipline is world-discipline; Self-mastery is world-mastery; Self-knowledge is world-knowledge or omniscience.

This is the nature of God. God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent because He is the Self of all things – not merely of the subjective side of things, but also the objective side of things. While we experience the consciousness aspect of the subject, we do not experience

the consciousness aspect of the object because we always make the mistake of thinking that the object is outside us. There is a sea of consciousness within us, and when we enter into that sea of consciousness we have entered into the manifestations of it in various forms at the same time.

To reiterate what I said in the previous session, this is spaceless and timeless experience. This is not an experience that takes place in the future or in a distant place in the expanse of space. It is a totality, a simultaneity, an instantaneity. That is all we can say about it, for which we have to strive by subduing ourselves to such an extent that our individuality is abolished completely and we remain what we were originally, prior to our manifestation as *jivas*, at the point of creation.

Chapter 4

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA

Today we come to the more practical side of spiritual life, a necessity that arises automatically from the structure or the nature of things. We observed that the objective and the subjective sides of things run parallelly towards the destination of their evolution; and the two lines of evolution, or processes of development, seem to have a corresponding similarity and uniformity of action underlying them and controlling them even from outside.

The world-experience, or empirical perception, is the way in which the object is envisaged and looked upon by the subject as an external something. Spiritual experience, on the contrary, is the recognition and the experience of the underlying uniformity and unity that rules supreme over the apparently bifurcated processes known as the objective and the subjective sides of experience.

When the mental mode of the subject perceives an object as an external something, a modification takes place in the mental makeup. In Sanskrit, this transformation taking place in the mind due to the presence of an object in front of it is called a *vritti*. A psychosis, a modification, a sensation or a reaction that spontaneously takes place in the structure of the mind, or the mind-stuff, is a *vritti*. Just as when butter is brought near fire a transformation takes place in the lump of butter due to the effect produced by the heat of the fire, and just as objects that are dear or objects of hatred bring about a transformation in the mind of the subject perceiving the object, likewise, every object in

the world brings about a corresponding transformation in the mind. This is what we call empirical experience, brought about by sensory contact and psychological cognition.

We continuously transform ourselves due to the very presence of objects outside us. This transformation is not necessarily conscious. It does not mean that we are always aware of the mental transformations taking place within ourselves. Part of this transformation becomes a content of our conscious experience, but the major part of it is unconsciously undergone. This is the peculiarity of our psychological makeup.

We have different layers of personality, and these various levels of our being determine our total experience. Our personality, the human nature, is not merely the conscious level of our activity or experience. We do not know our own selves wholly. We are ignorant of what is taking place in the major part of our own personality. This is the reason why we have moods and passages of experience, one succeeding the other, over most of which we have neither a control nor a proper knowledge.

A part of our personality is given to us as conscious experience. Similarly, a part of our bank balance may be in a current deposit, a part of it may be in a fixed deposit, and a part of it may be in a certificate. Whatever be the nature of the deposit, the whole of our financial resources is not in our current account, but part of it is drawn from the source for daily requirements. Likewise, a portion of our total experience is given to us as conscious activity. We draw upon the conscious level of our experience, and keep the major part in a fixed deposit because it is not necessary for

daily experience. But, that fixed deposit can also be called into conscious experience when it is necessary. It can even be encashed prematurely when emergencies arise, or when we are in a difficult situation on the conscious level.

Usually, we do not draw upon the deeper resources. We get on with our conscious experience mostly, and we may even forget the existence of the major resources that we do not draw upon in day-to-day life. If we are very rich and our current account is large enough to maintain us throughout our life, we may even forget the existence of our fixed deposit. Likewise, our entire personality never comes to the surface, to our conscious activity or conscious experience. The major part of our life is buried deep, but it influences our personality even though it does not actually operate actively on the conscious level.

We have reserve forces of the army, of police, and so on. They do not come into conscious action always. Their energies or powers are not drawn upon every day. To give another example, we have the central operative force at the governmental level which determines the activities of the various departments. Their very existence and presence is enough to influence the activities of the lower departments at the day-to-day level of activity. Similarly, our mental structure can get on with the quota that is given to it for conscious activity, and we are likely to mistake our conscious level of experience as the entirety of our life, so that we are apt to make remarks about our own selves, judging ourselves from the point of view of what we are experiencing today at the conscious level. "I am well off" is a general remark that some people may make when they

judge themselves from the point of view of what they are experiencing at that given moment of time.

We cannot judge ourselves merely by knowing our personality from today's experience. There is a vast past behind us, and also an enormous future ahead of us. Both the past and the future determine our present. That which has gone past as an experience, leaving an impression in our mind, as well as what is to pull us ahead as a future – both these aspects of our experience have a say in the matter of our present experience. The quantity of desires in our mind – those desires that have been fulfilled, are yet to be fulfilled, and the consequent experiences that follow as a result of these unfulfilled desires of the future as well as the impressions left by past desires – all these tell upon our present life, so that our present experience is a complex of various factors coming from various sides, from different parts of the world, inwardly and outwardly, so that we represent in our individuality a cross section of world experience.

A single individual, when properly studied, is in a position to give us an idea of the total cosmic situation. All the roads that lead to the various corners of the world cross at a point, which we call the individual, and this cross section is the study in the practice of yoga. Just as the main switchboard may show us the position of the various pinpoints or plug points in electricity, a cross section that is taken in the form of an individual and studied properly will give us an idea of the world situation today. The whole of the cosmos has its impact upon every individual. The cosmic situation cannot be objectively studied, on account of the inadequacy of our instruments;

but the whole cosmos can be studied through every individual because every individual, taken independently, represents a replica of the cosmic situation. The whole cosmos is reflected in each individual, and the study of the individual is, therefore, the study of the cosmos. The bondage of the individual, again, is due to a cosmic situation, and the liberation of the individual will also be an outcome of a cosmic situation, so that *samsara* is not merely an experience of a particular individual but a cosmic situation represented in its totality. The liberation of an individual is also a cosmic experience. There is no such thing as individual salvation. When an individual attains liberation, the whole cosmos is correspondingly affected because the individual is a reflection, as it were, of the whole cosmic setup.

The study of the psychology of yoga is, thus, a cosmic study of things. It is not a study of the psychology of a particular individual or the cooperation of the mental makeup of an individual taken independently. The practice of yoga is a cosmic science because the study of the individual is at once the study of the cosmic situation. The study of the world and the study of the individual mean one and the same thing. We can take a single leaf of a tree and study the entire makeup of the tree; the structure of the entire tree is reflected in the makeup of a single leaf. Or, to give another example, a single cell of the body will tell us what our whole body is. When our blood is medically examined, only a drop is taken, and the whole system of our body is studied from that single drop of blood. A single cell taken out of our body, when properly studied, will tell us what our whole personality is, because the entire system

is organic in its structure. It is organic in the sense that everything is influenced by everything else. Every part of the body is a representation of the total body.

Every individual is thus a representative of the total cosmos. Everything that is in the *pindanda* is in the *brahmanda*. Whatever is outside, is inside. The universe is an organic structure, even as the human body is an organic structure. And just as the organic structure of the human body can be studied by studying a part of it – a cell, for example, or a drop of blood – the whole cosmos can be studied by the study of a single individual.

Even in the individual, it is the centre of the individual that matters most – the mental structure. The psychology of the human being is the whole human being. When our mind is studied, the whole of our personality is studied in all its levels of experience. The study of mind is the study of yoga. The study of human nature is the study of mind, and that again is what we know as the study of yoga in its generality and in its particularity. The control of the mind is yoga: *yogaḥ cittavṛitti nirodhaḥ* (YS 1.2). This is because the mind is a cross section of the whole creation. We can operate upon the entire cosmos by operating upon the factors constituting the mental structure of an individual. The study of the mind is the study of yoga, or the study of the cosmic structure, and the control of the mind is the control of the whole universe.

We are now pinpointed at the cross section that is called the psychological organ. In Sanskrit, it is called the *antahkarana*. The study of the *antahkarana* is the study of the psychological structure of the human being. What is the psychological nature of a person? It is everything that can

be comprised within what may be called the experience of the individual. What we call our experience is our psychological operation. I deliberately use the word 'experience', and not 'consciousness', because consciousness is mistaken for the waking experience of our day-to-day life. But our psychological structure is not exhausted by the waking experience merely. We have other experiences than the waking. There are various levels of our psychological structure. What we are is not merely what we experience in our waking life. We have dream experiences which bring out more of our personality than the waking life. Many of our truths are revealed in our dream life rather than our waking life.

Do you know why our whole personality is not revealed in waking life? Because there is social censor – the reality, as it is called in psychoanalysis. The reality of the world censors many of our experiences. Just as our mail can be censored and those letters which are objectionable in their nature may not be delivered, objectionable desires and experiences are not delivered into conscious experience due to social censor. This is the reason why we bury many of our experiences within us, and keep ourselves locked up within a prison house created by our own selves, so that we have a private personality which is independent of our public personality. We are different in our house from what we are in our office. When we return from the office, we speak with our family members in another way altogether from how we behave in the office. This is because the office experiences are controlled by public censor, and so we do not deliver our entire personality there; otherwise, we will be regarded as misfits. So we deliver ourselves in a very

controlled manner in public life, so that we are artificial personalities. Our natural personality is submerged because society does not want our entire personality to be exhibited. We may be unfit, anti-social elements if our entire personality is shown. Society has a law of its own. Not only society, but the whole universe, in its astronomical setup, has a law of its own; therefore, we try to abide by the laws operating outside by exhibiting a necessary part of our personality, and burying inside what may be called an unnecessary part of our personality from the point of view of the social law that is operating for the time being.

It does not mean that social law is the same everywhere. For example, in social circles of natives who are not up-to-date in the sense of a modern, civilized, educated culture, the laws may be different. Certain natives or aboriginals remain nude, whereas we regard that with opprobrium. Similarly, marriage laws differ from society to society. The way in which people judge each other also differs from society to society. The social customs, faith and religious background all determine the way in which we exhibit ourselves in society. Hence, we judge our personality from the point of view of various factors involved in our present setup of environment.

Our environment is, again, complex. We are not in a very simple, easy environment at any time. We have a political and social environment of which we have to be conscious, and the social culture and etiquette must also be taken note of. We cannot go against these. And there are umpteen other factors which are woven into the very fabric of our personality from our birth itself, so that we are

artificial personalities from childhood onwards. We do not know what our real personality is.

Sometimes our real personality exhibits itself when society casts us to the winds. A situation of that nature may occasionally arise in our lives. Sometimes revolutions take place in society which completely throw out the existing norms of ethics and conduct, and each person seems to be standing on his own or her own legs. When there is no control of any kind, everything is at sixes and sevens, when we do not know whether or not we are going to live, when everything is in the form of a social fever and a political upheaval, the true colour of the individual personality comes up.

But such occasions are very rare. These are only academic or theoretical possibilities that we are discussing, as they do not take place every day. They have occasionally taken place in the history of nations; but as they are not daily experiences, they cannot be taken as normalcy in our behaviour. Normally we always live an artificial life of a controlled exhibition of our personality, and the major part of it is kept in reserve for exhibition only under possible and given circumstances.

The practice of yoga is an art of bringing out to the conscious level of experience the entirety of our personality, so that we may not be artificial individuals at any time. To be artificial is a very unhappy thing, as we know very well. We do not like to be what we are not. Yet we are compelled by circumstances to exhibit an artificial personality. We speak with people in a very made-up fashion. We have to think thrice before we utter words, because every word that we speak may be weighed on a balance, especially if we are

a political unit. And so we are very controlled in our expression, and do not give up the entirety of our ideas; we look in all ten directions before we speak a word. All this is because we have to take note of the consequences that follow from our actions. We cannot be normal persons in the present-day world, to mention the situation precisely. No one is one-hundred-percent normal because society controls us, political laws control us, our economic conditions control us, and even our family circumstances have a say in the matter. We are not absolutely free individuals in society. We are bound by various factors, and so we are unhappy at the core of our hearts.

We try to be happy by creating artificial conditions, which are mostly techniques of forgetting our worries rather than the solution to our problems. We go to movies, to clubs, to parties, on picnics; we have a drink, a smoke, strong tea, etc. All these are methods of forgetting the devil. They are not solutions to our problems, because these problems cannot be solved. We know these problems are so deep and complicated that they cannot be solved at all. So what do we do? If they cannot be solved and if they weigh heavy on our heads daily, they may create a complex and we may become maniacs. To avoid this possibility of going mad, we create artificial circumstances of forgetting the tense situations in life.

Hence, we live artificial lives from beginning to end, forgetting reality altogether, and never giving reality a chance to get into our lives. Reality is terrible. The world is not our friendly neighbour; it has its own laws, which we cannot abide by, so the best thing is to forget the worries rather than solve the problems. Most of us adopt this

escapist attitude of forgetting reality. Most of us are escapists. Every person in the world has some form of escapism in his or her personality on account of not being able to find an ultimate solution to problems. The problems are so many; they are quantitatively large and qualitatively very annoying. Life is an utter failure in the case of most people in the world. It is not a success, because reality is different from the makeup of our psychological constitution. We can be successes in life only if our inner nature is to be in conformity with the outer reality.

Yoga practice is a supernormal technique adopted by ancient adepts and masters, by which we can tune our inner personality to the reality that is outside. For this we have to make a thorough study of our personality first, and then study the nature of the reality that is outside. This is the study of philosophy. Philosophical investigations and analyses are the processes by which we study the nature of reality as well as the nature of our inner personality. Philosophy includes metaphysics and psychology. It is metaphysics in the sense that it is a study of the nature of reality as such, and it is psychology in the sense that it is a study of our own inner nature. Hence, *sadhana*, or spiritual practice, is philosophy and psychology combined. These combined together make spirituality.

Thus, we have a very difficult subject before us. It is a study of our own self as a psychological unit on one side, and study of the vast reality of the world and creation on the other side. Therefore a *sadhaka*, or a spiritual seeker, should have an acute intellect and be a very profound psychologist. A foolish person cannot be a spiritual person. It is not mere emotion that is called devotion to God; it is a

philosophical efflorescence of our personality that takes the form of a spiritual aspiration. The aspiration for God-realisation, or the ultimate perfection of life, is the growth of our total personality in conformity with the reality that is outside. The whole universe grows together with us when we grow spiritually. The spiritual aspirant is not an ordinary individual. The spiritual seeker is a representative of the whole cosmos evolving towards the Absolute.

It is a wonderful thing to understand, to study, and to make an investigation of. We become very interesting individuals. The philosophical mind is a very interesting unit. Nothing can be more interesting than the study of philosophy and psychology in its true connotation. The study of psychology is the study of the total personality of the individual – conscious, subconscious, unconscious and spiritual – and at the same time, it is a philosophical study of the ultimate constitution of things. Philosophy, properly defined, is the explanation of events by their ultimate causes, not by their immediate causes.

For example, in medical science we have the study of disease by its ultimate causes as well as by its immediate causes. We have a headache. Why do we have a headache? Perhaps we slept in the open the previous night, in a misty atmosphere, and today we have a headache. This is the study of our headache by immediate cause. But the ultimate cause may not be merely our sleeping outside. Many other factors have contributed to our headache today. We may have walked in the hot sun, or we may have had a tense day due to overwork; we may have even had a small family quarrel which contributed to today's headache, and so on. We can multiply causes which jointly contribute to the

experience of the shooting pain or migraine that we have today. We cannot simply swallow an aspirin and cure our headache, because many other factors have contributed to it. We may suppress our headache by taking an aspirin. It may go today, but after few days it will again come. We have to go on swallowing pills because we have not found the ultimate cause of our illness.

Likewise, we cannot attain ultimate freedom or liberation merely by the study of immediate causes. We have to study the ultimate causes of things. Every experience, every event that takes place in the world has a cause behind it, and every cause has another cause behind it. There is a chain of causes and effects, taking us to the ultimate cause of things, the causeless Cause, which we may theologially term the Creator of the cosmos, God. The causeless cause is God, the Unmoved Mover, as we sometimes say.

Likewise, there is a corresponding study subjectively, studying the nature of mental phenomena. The causes of mental phenomena have to be studied – not only their structure, but also their antecedents. This would be the study of profound psychology. And, as I said, the study of psychology and the study of philosophy have to go together simultaneously, parallel to each other, because they are mutually related sciences.

The study of the spiritual nature of things is thus a blending together of the philosophical and psychological aspects of education. The highest form of education is, therefore, its spiritual form, which takes the entirety of experience and does not leave aside any part of it. We become dispassionate in this study. Education is a

dispassionate process of ultimately moving towards Perfection. We should not have prejudices when we enter into the educational process. We should shed all our pre-conceived notions and be a clean slate, as they say, without anything written on it. This is to enter into the school of education as a fully prepared individual to receive knowledge from the school of nature and to be ready for the process of evolution in its fullness, both subjectively and objectively.

Education is not merely a subjective process. It is also not merely a study of objective phenomena. Unfortunately, today we are failures in our education because we have limited education to the study of objects. It may be physics, it may be chemistry, it may be mathematics, or it may be geography – all these are objective sciences which have nothing to do with subjective phenomena. This is why we are still unhappy even after we complete our education of these objects. We have not studied ourselves. Even the study of psychology is not exhausted these days. Psychologists are not necessarily happy persons because they have taken psychology as an objective science – as a study of the behaviour of personality rather than the inner structure of the mind.

We are mostly behaviourist psychologists, rather than psychologists of the true nature of the mind. The mind is not merely our behaviour or conduct. It is a deeper factor in ourselves than mere behaviour. It is the behaviour of the mind, but what is the mind? That is what we have to study now – what the mind is made of. Therefore, psychology cannot be exhausted merely by the study of the behaviour of the mind. While behaviour is a part of psychological

study, we also have to study what is it that behaves in the manner that it does.

The structure of the mind and the structure of nature combined make up the studies in a real scheme of education. The whole universe is studied in its inner structure and outer makeup. This is the education of yoga. Yoga education may be regarded thus as a complete education of the personality, taking into proper consideration both the inward and outward phenomena of experience.

The study of the mind is not merely the study of subjective phenomenon, because mind is not merely inside; it is also outside. This is a startling truth that comes out when we study yoga psychology. In Western psychology, the mind of the human being is regarded purely as a subjective phenomenon and has nothing to do with the objective side of nature. But yoga psychology is a different technique altogether, which tells us that the mind is connected with external phenomena also, and it is not merely an event privately taking place in the individual. The study of the mind is the study of cosmic situations. The whole world will ultimately be realised as a phenomenon of a vaster mind than what we observe as individual thinking faculties.

We will realise the existence of a cosmic mind when we deeply study the implications of individual minds. Behind every drop there is the ocean, and we should not forget this fact. Likewise, as precedent to the individual mind working apparently within the locus of the personality of an individual, there is a vaster mind of a cosmic connotation.

All the objects in the world are determined by the structure of the cosmic mind.

The study of yoga is the study of the cosmic mind, and not merely an individual mind. This is why yoga is not a private business. It is not the practice of a single individual; it is the work of the whole cosmos. Many people are under the false notion that yoga is a private individual business, taking the individual to God independently, irrespective of what happens to other people in the world outside. It is not so. Yoga is not an individual business; it is not a private practice. It is the practice of the cosmic mind, which takes into consideration the existence of other individuals also – not only the other individuals, but the whole of creation in its completeness.

Jijñāsur api yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate (Gita 6.44): One who knows what yoga is has gone beyond theoretical learning. Therefore, it is very difficult even to understand what yoga is, let alone to practise it. Most of us have a false notion about it. We think that we can practice yoga privately, independent of what happens outside in the world. What happens in the world influences us and has a say in the matter, so that our freedom has much to do with what takes place outside – not only in human society on this Earth, but in the whole of creation.

When we enter into the practice of yoga we become cosmic individuals, or citizens of the universe as a whole. We become supernormal in our activities and in our way of thinking. The yoga way of thinking is supernormal, superphysical, uncanny, and difficult to understand. We become impersonal in our attitudes. We are no longer citizens of any particular nation when we become students

of yoga. We think in a manner which is incapable of understanding by ordinary people. Immediately we are open to the system of laws which seem to transcend human comprehension.

The study of mind and the study of nature become one and the same thing. Mind and nature are so intimately related to each other that the study of one thing is the study of another thing. Reality is thought and being combined. The nature of Truth is a blending together of object and subject. Truth is not only within; it is also not only without. It is not objective; it is not subjective. It is not material; it is not psychological. Therefore, neither subjective psychology nor objectivist materialism can be a study of reality as such. Truth is not materialistic, and it is not psychological. It is spiritual. Spirituality transcends materiality and psychology. It is not objectivity, and it is not subjectivity. It is not something that we can see with our eyes or in our mind. It is a cosmic experience which has the characteristic of the objectivity of nature and also the subjectivity of the mind. Reality has the characteristic of the subjectivity of consciousness and also the objectivity of nature, so that when we come to the Realisation of the Absolute, which is the Ultimate Reality, we have both the objective content of the cosmos and the subjective content of the individual combined in a blend and sublimation.

God is defined as Satchidananda: Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. The reason for this definition is that it is consciousness from the point of view of subjective experience and existence from the point of view of objectivity. We have deliberately brought the definition of existence and consciousness into the characterisation of

Reality because objectivity is often regarded as bereft of consciousness. For example, a mountain, a stone or an inanimate thing outside does not seem to have consciousness in it. Consciousness is only in the mind; so to attribute reality with the character of consciousness, we have to associate with it subjectivity. But pure subjectivity is not reality because we may have subjective reveries or imaginations which may not have any kind of counterpart in the objective world, and so we also bring in the existence aspect of the objective world. The objectivity of the objective world, or the reality of nature, as well as consciousness or the subject, are brought together in Reality.

Therefore, God-experience is not the experience of any particular individual, and is also not the study of objective nature, but is a transcendence of both the subject and the object. *Yogaḥ cittavṛitti nirodhaḥ*, or the control of mind in yoga, is not a study and control merely of our individual mind, but is a study of every mind. It is a general, impersonal science. The control of the mind in yoga does not try to control our individual mind merely, to the exclusion of what happens in the minds of other people. It is a study of all minds. That is why yoga is to be considered as an objective and impersonal science, valid for all times, for all human beings, and for every religion, cast, creed, cult and faith.

Yoga is not a science which is applicable only to Hindu society. It has no Hinduism or any kind of 'ism' associated with it. It is the science of humanity because it is the impersonal science of psychology and physics combined. As I told you, it is spirituality; and spirituality is not merely

the study of a religion. Yoga and spirituality are not religious sciences, and do not belong to any cult, creed or faith. They are pure objective sciences capable of being applied to every individual of every creed and cult, whether of the East or the West, and whatever the belief of the individual. Yoga is a matter-of-fact science. Hence, it is impossible for a person to get on ultimately in one's life without a study and practice of yoga. The study of yoga is the study of the minds of all people for the sake of exercising a control over the phenomenon of mind in general.

A beautiful definition of yoga has been given by Patanjali in his *sutra*, *yogaḥ cittavṛitti nirodhaḥ*: The *vrittis* or modifications of the mind in general, whatever be their nature, should be controlled. It is not the study of one mind, but the study of all minds in general in their entirety of phenomena, in the conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels. This study is yoga. How vast and universal is yoga! How necessary is yoga, we will come to know by a little probe into its inner structure and makeup.

The control of the mind in yoga is brought about by universal methods applicable to all individuals. The science of yoga, the technique of controlling the mind, is not applicable merely to us as an individual. It is applicable to all, like medical science, astronomy, physics, which are all universal sciences applicable to every individual. We do not have different kinds of physics for different students in different universities; the science of physics is the same. Likewise is the study of yoga. It is a universal science applicable to all minds, at all places, at all times. When we control the mind in yoga, we study the *vrittis* of the mind in

general. As I began by saying, the *vritti*, or the psychosis of the mind, is a modification that takes place in any mind, not merely my mind or your mind, when an object is brought before it. Therefore, we have to study the impersonal mental reaction that is generated by the presence of any object, whatever be its character.

According to Patanjali at least, these reactions created in the mind of any individual by the presence of any object is twofold. There are two kinds of *vrittis* in our mind, and these two kinds of *vrittis* are to be studied in yoga. As a matter of fact, the control of these two *vrittis* is yoga. When we study the nature of these two modifications of the mind, we acquire a sort of control over the mental makeup of the individual in general – the mind-stuff, the *chitta*, as we call it: *yogaḥ cittavṛitti nirodhaḥ*. *Chitta* is the term used by Patanjali for the stuff of the mind, and not merely the conscious activity of the mind. Here in yoga when we use the word ‘mind’, we do not mean merely the functions of the conscious mind. The stuff of which it is made is to be controlled; the root of the tree of the mind is to be dug out and brought into conscious experience.

In this process of the study of yoga in its generality and the study of the twofold *vrittis*, or the psychoses of the mind, we exhaust the study of every individual phenomenon. What are these two kinds of *vrittis*? What are these twofold psychoses? These are the emotional and the non-emotional phenomena of the mind. We think emotionally and also non-emotionally, and these two aspects of the mind have to be separated because to study the non-emotional phenomena of mind is a little more difficult than to study the emotional phenomena.

Mostly we are in emotional states, and these emotional conditions are controlled by non-emotional *vrittis* behind them. An emotion is a direct impact of the object on the mind. A non-emotional mental phenomenon is an indirect influence of the object upon the mind. The surface experience is emotional; the deeper experience is non-emotional. Mostly we are in states of love and hatred. Almost, in every moment of our life, we are in a state of either like or dislike. The like or dislike for things has become so natural to us that we are not always aware that we are in that state. We are always in that state; therefore, it has become natural to us. We are perpetually in a state of like or dislike. These are more acute forms of human psychological illness, and are to be remedied first.

In the study of medicine, for example, acute diseases are taken first and chronic diseases are studied afterwards. Suppose we have a high temperature, and we also have eczema. The eczema aspect of our illness is not treated just now, as the temperature has to be brought down first. The doctor is more concerned with bringing down the temperature than treating the eczema, though it is also an illness. Similarly, emotion is a disease in us of a more acute character and has to be remedied primarily, and the general disease of a chronic character can be studied later on. We have two illnesses of mind: the chronic and the acute. The acute disease is the emotional and the chronic disease is the non-emotional. Patanjali, in his psychology, takes us directly to the study of these two sides of psychological phenomena, called *vrittis*, which have to be studied first in order that they may be controlled and properly directed in a given manner.

Now, our emotions are primarily of like and dislike. But why do we like or dislike things? This is to go deep into the psychology of the human being. It is because of our like and dislike for things that we are happy or unhappy in life. But why should we like a thing or dislike a thing? Our immediate answer would be that we like a particular person or object because it brings us satisfaction, and the contrary is the case when we dislike a person or object. But the deep psychologists' answer, such as Patanjali for example, is different. We like or dislike a person or thing not because that person or thing brings us pleasure or pain, but because we have not understood that person or object. Our likes or dislikes are not dependent upon the pleasure or pain that comes thereof or there-through, but are because of our ignorance of the person or object in front of us. We are not fully aware of our relation to that person outside us and, therefore, we like or dislike that person.

As I told you, the psychology of yoga is deeper than ordinary psychology studied in colleges. It has nothing to do with the hedonistic attitude of pleasure and pain, though it may be the immediate answer of an ordinary person. We do not know our proper underlying relationship with that person or object, which is *avidya*, says Patanjali. Ignorance of the true nature of things is responsible for our likes and dislikes of them.

What is this ignorance? We do not know our situation itself, where we are stationed. The location of our personality in the structure of the cosmos is not properly known to us. We are ignorant of the cosmic location of our personality. Why should we immediately pass judgement on the things of the world, taking them for granted? "Oh, I

don't like this," is the remark of many people regarding other persons and other objects. Why should we make such a remark? Are we so important as to pass judgement on things? Have we understood them properly?

When we have a high fever, our likes and dislikes have no meaning, especially in regard to articles of diet. Only a medical man can judge us properly; a patient cannot judge himself. And from the point of view of yogic psychology, everyone is a patient, metaphysically speaking. There is what is called the metaphysical evil in creation as a whole, which has to be averted; and we require a proper doctor to treat it. Our judgements have no meaning. They are silly and are based on ignorance and prejudice. Suppose a defendant in a court is made a judge; what judgement will he pass? He will pass judgement on his own behalf. The judge has to be sure that he does not belong to any side in the case; he has to be impersonal. If the patient becomes the judge of his own condition, his judgements are very prejudiced. We require an impersonal teacher of yoga who is not partial to our individual experiences. Our yoga teacher should not be a member of our family, such as a brother who is very fond of us. He must be an impersonal Guru who takes note of the impersonal facts underlying the personal experiences in our private life.

Thus, in yoga psychology and the study of yogic science we come face to face with the facts of mental experience – emotional and non-emotional, likes and dislikes primarily – which are based on an ignorance of the fact of the reality of things. *Avidya*, or ignorance, is the cause of likes and dislikes. Hence, first of all our ignorance has to be remedied. When the cause is removed, the effect is also

removed. The cause of the illness has to be dug out in order that the disease in its outer expression may cease as an effect.

Yoga psychology takes us to yoga philosophy. They are intimately related because the study of yoga philosophy is the study of the causes of mental phenomena, the study of which again is called yoga psychology. Emotional experiences have to be studied before we study general mental phenomena in yoga.

We have, says Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras, a mistaken notion of pleasure. We are in pursuit of pleasure always. That is why we are selfish in our activities. Wherever there is observed a centre of satisfaction or pleasure, we cling to that centre. Patanjali takes us deeper into the phenomena of pleasure itself. What is pleasure? Do we really derive pleasure from an object? Patanjali tells us that we do not really derive pleasure from objects. The objects do not give us pleasure, in the same way as scratching eczema does not bring us real happiness. Suppose we have itching all over our body, and we scratch it. Scratching gives us some pleasure, but can we call that scratching real pleasure? It is a nervous phenomenon brought about by a morbid condition of the body.

Because the mind is in a morbid state, we seem to derive happiness from objects. Patanjali gives us a *sutra*: pariñāma tāpa saṃskāraduḥkaiḥ guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ (2.15). On account of various factors, which he mentions in this aphorism, all experiences ultimately give us pain and do not give us pleasure. When we fulfil a desire, we have a further desire. Well, if the fulfilment of a particular desire is to bring about

a complete cessation of that desire and we are not going to have further desires, all right, we fulfil our desire. But what is our experience in daily life? Every fulfilment of a desire brings about a further desire as a consequence, so that the more is the fulfilment of our desire, the more is the painful consequence that follows. Desires have no end. There will never come a day when we can say that we have fulfilled all our desires and we want nothing. We always want something. Hence *parinama*, or the consequence of fulfilling a desire, is a further desire.

Tapa is another experience that comes upon us in the wake of the fulfilment of a desire. *Tapa* is anxiety. When we are in the presence of an object which is capable of fulfilling our desire, we are anxious. Will we be able to get it? Will somebody obstruct our fulfilment of this desire? And when we possess that desired object, how long will we keep it? Somebody may intrude on us, and we may be robbed of our property. The rich man is unhappy, and the poor man is unhappy. The rich man is afraid of the government, taxation and robbers, and the poor man is unhappy because he has nothing. Anyhow, we are unhappy. *Labhe dukham, jaye dukham*: When there is gain, there is unhappiness of one kind; when there is loss, there is unhappiness of another kind. So there is always a perpetual anxiety both before the fulfilment of a desire and after its fulfilment. After the fulfilment of a desire, a depression is brought about in the whole system. Those who have had sensory indulgence will know what it is. We are exhausted, depleted; we become melancholy, moody and we become sick, so that we go for further enjoyment to forget the pain of the sickness.

Therefore Patanjali says that when we fulfil a desire there is the consequence of a further rise of desires, *parinama*, and there is *tapa* or anxiety, which attends upon the fulfilment of a desire both before and after. There is a *samskara* or an impression created in the mind when a desire is fulfilled, like a groove on a gramophone record. Once the music is played upon a gramophone record, a groove is formed on it, so that we can go on playing the record again and again and produce the same music. In the same manner, on account of a particular experience of satisfaction or pleasure due to the fulfilment of a desire, an impression, or *samskara*, or groove is formed on the mind. And this groove is permanently formed. The mind brings up to the conscious level the groove that is already formed, and it begins to sing the same tune that was sung once before. The same desire is created once again. Desire is endless, and so we have repeated processes of births and deaths due to the grooves formed in the mental gramophone record, and we are born and die perpetually in the process of transmigration on account of the impressions formed due to the desires fulfilled in a so-called pleasurable experience.

Also, *guṇavṛtti virodhāt ca*: the *gunas* are the properties of matter – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is equilibrium, *rajas* is distraction, and *tamas* is inertia or the stability of a body. When equilibrium is brought about in the mental structure, we seem to be happy, but this condition will not last long. We will never be in a state of equilibrium perpetually. After the temporary state of equilibrium is brought about by the fulfilment of a desire, we are once again in a state of distraction of mind and a mood of

melancholy, which is *tamas*. Like the spokes of a wheel that go on rotating perpetually, bringing the spokes up and down due to the motion of the wheel, the *gunas* of *prakriti* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* – are perpetually in motion, so that we are not always in a state of *sattva*; we cannot always be happy.

For all these reasons, says Patanjali, the world is full of misery, unhappiness. It is not really a source of satisfaction. Therefore, give up hunting after pleasure in this world of objects, which only tempt you but do not give real satisfaction. The world is a temptation; it is not an object of satisfaction. Knowing this, let *vairagya* or renunciation, or an attitude of dispassion, be developed in the mind for *abhyasa*, or the practice of yoga, about which I shall tell you something as an outline.

Chapter 5

THE STAGES OF PRACTICE

When the loss of something disturbs our minds, we may be said to be emotionally connected with it. This is the test of emotional attachment. When possessions or objects with which we are associated are taken away from us and it does not seriously affect our minds, it may be said that the emotions are not primarily connected with those things or objects.

The practice of yoga consists primarily of two stages, known as *vairagya* and *abhyasa*. *Vairagya* is the emotional detachment of the personality from objects with which one is related in that manner, while *abhyasa* is a higher process still, which we shall consider in outline shortly.

As I pointed out previously, most of our experiences are emotional, which means that the gain or the loss of those things affects us seriously. We feel exhilarated on the possession of them and depressed at the loss of them. Thus, most of the experiences of humanity may be regarded as emotional, and not impersonal or psychological in the general sense of the term. Yoga psychology deals effectively with these two aspects of human experience – emotion and pure psychological observations of objects. These two processes are known as *vairagya* and *abhyasa*.

In the emotional context, we are also subject simultaneously to loves and hatreds. *Raga* and *dvesha*, affection and the opposite of it, are inseparable from our emotional relationship with objects. It is when the emotions are connected with things that we get excited over

them. A thing that is seen or something that is heard may disturb us to such an extent that we may lose intellectual comprehension of the situation and become upset in our entire personality, during which occasion it is that we lose consciousness of our personal decorum, even our ethical principles, and above all, our logical understanding. When we are possessed of emotion, we lose the capacity to argue logically. Everything seems to be an expression of the object of that emotion in which state of excitement we lose control over ourselves and also lose control over the principles of ethics, morality, and understanding.

The first process of yoga is, therefore, to free ourselves from emotional entanglements of every kind. Our observation of objects should not be tinged with affection or hatred. This is easy to analyse in principle, but very difficult to practise, because emotions cannot be analysed when one is under the grip of emotions. Anything that has become a part and parcel of our own life cannot become an object of observation or study. This is why we cannot study our own minds, because we and our minds are one and the same thing.

All observation is of external objects, but not of one's own self. There is no such thing as observation of one's own self. That is not possible in practical life. And as emotion is nothing but one of the aspects of the function of the mind, the study of one's own emotions is equally difficult. But, by gradual dissociation of ourselves from situations which are emotionally related to us, we can free ourselves from these illnesses of the mind.

The disciplines of yoga ask us to detach ourselves from emotional relationships gradually, by systematic stages.

Gross entanglements are to be dealt with first, and subtler relationships may be dealt with a little later. The visible and the grosser manifestations of emotional attachment have to be remedied by physical dissociation of oneself from objects which cause emotional disturbances.

There are certain things, objects in the world, the sight of which emotionally disturb us. You should be physically away from them for a part of the day at least, to commence the practice. For a few hours of the day you should try to be away from the physical proximity of those persons and things who may be the causes of emotional tension in your mind. They may be objects of your affection or objects of your dislike; both are equally emotions. It may be your son, daughter, husband, wife; it makes no difference. These are all objects of emotional attachment.

In the earlier stages, you should dissociate yourself for only a few hours. For at least one or two hours of the day you should not look at them, speak to them or have any relationship with them. You should confine yourself to a room, or you may even go for a walk for two hours so that you will not see them. Various methods suitable to your circumstances of life can be adopted to physically wean yourself from these objects of attachment for one or two hours of the day.

Then you must be away from them for at least one day a week. On Sunday, do not be at home at all. Go away somewhere. Do not speak to your wife or husband, and have nothing to do with your children for at least this one day. Go wherever you like, such as to some distant shrine or temple. You may adopt whatever is possible in your social circumstances to wean yourself from them for one day in a

week. Thus, you may gradually increase the time of physical separation from your objects of attachment.

The fulfilment of this process is called the *vanaprastha* stage. When this detachment becomes complete socially, you are supposed to be in a state of *vanaprastha*. You are not householders anymore. But this stage cannot be reached quickly. That is why the suggestion is made that you wean yourself gradually from one or two hours to days, weeks and months. If it is perpetual detachment, it is *vanaprastha*.

This would be the first stage of *vairagya*. It is the first stage because you are dealing now with physical relationships, and not their subtler aspects. Just because you do not look at an object of your affection, it does not mean that you have no affection for it. Your mind will be contemplating those very things which are physically out of sight and with which you are not physically in contact due to the discipline which you have imposed upon yourself.

Though physical detachment is not sufficient, and the mental cessation of emotions is what we are aiming at, this aim cannot be realised at once. Hence, in the beginning try to be physically away from the objects of love and hatred. It is not merely objects of affection with which you are concerned, but also objects of dislike, whatever they be. These objects vary from person to person according to one's social condition.

This is a very serious suggestion in the practice of yoga, because no progress can be made when you are in the midst of these emotional entanglements. Whatever be your *japa* and meditation, you will achieve nothing because you are still in an atmosphere of emotional disturbance. Most of the

obstacles in yoga practice are effects of emotional activities taking place within. Emotional disturbances should be removed first, and later on we shall think of higher practices in yoga. So, as I said, the first practice is to be physically away from emotional objects.

The next step is to deal with the subtler causative factors of emotion, which are responsible for their physical activities. If you are away from your house for a month – say you are in the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh or you have gone to Badrinath for *tapasya* or you are in a shrine undergoing some spiritual discipline – watch your mind. Watch what your mind thinks for one month at least. Your mind will think of many things that are likely to be taking place at your house, such as commitments, something to be done, some needs, some problems or difficulties. All these that are associated with your family life will come to your memory even in Badrinath. These are the causative factors of emotional entanglements, and they cannot be observed when you are in the midst of physical relationships with objects.

Often, if you are away from physical relationships you will be able to observe the mental operation of emotion. Here it is proper and necessary to keep a very strict watch over the rise of these emotions subtly taking place in a lonely atmosphere. What are the emotions that arise in your mind when you are alone? Tabulate them. List them in your diary. You may have a desire to eat, a desire to drink, a desire to speak with certain persons, and you may have a desire for certain kinds of pleasure or enjoyment. Make note of these aspects of the rise of emotion. This is the

second stage of an observation that you can make about your mind.

In this second stage of mental observation you should be like physicians, judges in a court, or scientists in a laboratory – very impersonal and dispassionate. You should not give a long rope to your emotions and start weeping and feeling sorry for having been away from the objects of affection. The nature of the observation should be to find out the causes of the rise of these emotions. Why is it that you are thinking of these objects? What do you get from them?

There are two arguments which the mind may put forth. One is, it is your duty to be with them. It is your obligation to educate your children, to take care of your family and to perform certain services in the society in which you are placed, and so you must go back. This is the argument of duty. The other argument is that you are not yet ready for it, you are just a beginner on the path, and you have to fulfil your desires first and then see whether it possible for you to be away in Godly contemplation. But a third vehement argument of the mind can also come – that it is impossible to be entirely starved of all these pleasures of life. They are rebellious in their nature. Then your one month stay in Badrinath may be cut short. You may return in a few days. It will actually happen to you if you do it. You will have your own arguments for it, which look very logical and satisfactory. Every argument is satisfactory when it proceeds from you.

This is a setback in *sadhana*. This is why we say we should take the guidance of a Guru and be under the observation of the Guru. If the Guru has asked you to be

away for one month, you will not have the courage to return earlier, lest you should displease or disobey the orders of the Guru. Even if you are not in a position to obey these instructions quickly, you will have the opportunity to approach the Guru again and ask what is wrong with you that you have not been able to stick to this discipline for even one month.

The reason is that the mind has been trained to be in an atmosphere of pleasure and leniency right from the very beginning. It has never been taught any kind of strictness or discipline. The power of the will is very weak. You know how children are brought up in a family. They are given a long rope for everything. Discipline is totally unknown in families these days. Children are given whatever they ask for, whether it is good or bad, necessary or otherwise. And the example is set by the parents themselves. The parents are the most undisciplined of all, so naturally their children will be of the same sort because they have been brought up right from the beginning in such an atmosphere.

We have become very soft in the texture of our personality. Hardship is unknown to us. Difficulties cannot be faced, and even the first kick that we receive from nature is taken as hell falling on our heads. The spiritual path is a path of hardship in the sense that it is one of discipline, because it is a voluntary submission of oneself to the demands of the soul rather than the desires of the mind.

The desires of the mind are different from the demand of our soul. We have completely closed our eyes to the latter and are fully engaged in the former. We sometimes mistake the call of the soul for the askings of the mind. The mind is always connected with the objects of sense, while

the soul always aspires to be absolutely independent. It asks for freedom. The mind is in bondage always, while the spirit is always free. We always make a mistake of connecting the mind with the spirit, and vice versa, and the freedom of the mind is mistaken for the freedom of the spirit. As a matter of fact, what we have is only a licence given to the mind, and not freedom.

The *vairagya* required of a spiritual aspirant is, therefore, an emotional sublimation of oneself by gradual detachment from gross relationships as well as from subtler contemplations of enjoyments. This is the first stage in the practice of yoga. But this will take perhaps all one's life, though it is the first stage. According to the teachings of Patanjali, at least, it is a detachment of the emotions from objects both seen and heard. It is very hard indeed even to conceive. *Dr̥ṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitr̥ṣṇasya vaśīkārasam̐jñā vairāgyam* (1.15) is the definition of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. *Vairagya* is the mastery that we gain over our emotions by detachment from or dispassion for objects that are seen with the eyes or sensed with the senses, as well as those which we have merely heard of though we have not seen them. This is regarded as the lower *vairagya*, though it is so difficult, so hard even to think, and much worse to practice. But when we actually enter the field of graduated discipline, it will not be so difficult.

Suppose we hear that tomorrow we are going to have a saltless diet. Even to hear of it is a shock to most people because it is like *ekadasi*, or even worse. We have never been able to give up salt even for one day in our life because salt makes the food so tasty. It is the most essential item of

diet. One day in a year, perhaps, we give it up when we are here, in an ashram. One day in a year, and even that is shocking. We feel morose today itself just by hearing it. But this is a very silly form of discipline, very small and insignificant from the point of view of the larger disciplines that we are called upon to impose upon ourselves.

If you cannot impose discipline upon yourself deliberately and voluntarily, it may have to be imposed upon you by your teacher or the Guru. The rules of the institution demand this kind of discipline from the student. So it is essential to be in an atmosphere of an ashram or an institution where you are deliberately compelled to be under an atmosphere of discipline for some time in your life. For example, in an ashram you cannot drink or smoke. While you are in your own house if you are asked to impose discipline upon yourself and not smoke for a day, you will say all right, but after a few hours you will have one because there is nobody to control you. But in an ashram you are afraid, so it is not possible.

There are certain disciplines which are obligatory, and you cannot escape them. So it is essential to be in a holy atmosphere at least for some period of your life – in a temple or it may be an ashram of monks or *sadhaks* where these disciplines are natural and spontaneous. And as I mentioned, the subtler aspects have to be made an object of your observation, and you should try to dissociate yourself from even contemplation of objects. While you are physically detached from the objects of your pleasure, you should not simultaneously be thinking of them.

Karmendriyāṇi saṁyama ya āste manasā smaran,
indriyarthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate (Gita 3.6).

Failure is the result and folly is its name if you think of objects of satisfaction and enjoyment while you are physically away from them, because the real bondage is mental. *Samsara* is a mental phenomenon, not a physical connection. Birth and death are experiences of the mind, not of the body; therefore, the liberation that is achieved is also a mental phenomenon, not a physical phenomenon. The body is not connected with your pleasures and pains. It is the mind that enjoys and suffers, so what the mind does is more important; perhaps it is the only important factor. It is not the physical relationship that is of greater consequence. Hence, mental contemplation of objects of enjoyment is very reprehensible and should be controlled by methods which have to be dexterously employed.

There are three methods prescribed in Yoga Sastras, which can be employed. The first method that you can adopt when the mind thinks of an object of pleasure is to think of the opposite. It is called *pratipakshabhavana*, or the sudden opposite reaction that you set up in the mind when an emotion of enjoyment arises. You may simply think of an object of pleasure and your hair will stand on end. There will be creeping of the blood in the system, the nerves will be activated, and you may subtly have an enjoyment even if it is only in thought. This can be put an end to by thinking of the opposite. If an emotion of incontinence arises in the mind, suddenly think of a continent master like Hanuman or Bhishma.

Look at the power of Hanuman! What energy, what understanding, what knowledge, what strength he had! You cannot think of a power like Hanuman. What is the reason for that strength? From where did it come? It came by

control of the senses – complete sublimation of the powers of sensory activity. What power and strength Bhishma had! The whole world of kings and an entire army of all these valiant princes could not face one person, Bhishma. If you go on thinking like this, the emotion of attachment and affection comes down. The titillation of the nerves that has been created by the contemplation of an object of pleasure ceases and a positive, virtuous emotion rises in the mind.

If you hate a person from the bottom of your heart and you start thinking of that person even when you are in a holy atmosphere, then think of Buddha's compassion – how compassionate he was and how broad was his vision of things. Even insults poured upon him could not set up a reaction from him. Coolness, calmness, positivity, appreciation – this was the substance out of which the mind of Buddha was made. Then hatred ceases. *Raga* ceases by the thought of masters like Hanuman and Bhishma, and *dvesha* ceases by thinking of masters like Buddha.

Various other emotions of your mind can be counteracted by a *pratipakshabhavana* of a corresponding type. This is the method of substitution in psychoanalysis. We substitute one thing for another thing. If a child asks for a knife to play with, you give it a beautiful toy instead, and so on. The method of substitution, of replacing one emotion with another emotion, the vicious one with the virtuous one, the lower with the higher, is *pratipakshabhavana*, a very effective method which is prescribed by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras.

The other method which you can adopt is to think of the consequences of the control of the senses. What result will follow by control of the senses? If you control the

senses, what happens? You become a master of things. Some of these phenomena are described by Patanjali in some of his *sutras* in the Vibhuti Pada, the third chapter of the Yoga Sutras. Mastery over the self is mastery over the universe, because the controlling apparatus of all objects is in the subject. You may wonder how this could happen. It is because the subject, as I mentioned yesterday, is not merely the individual or a person. The subject that we are seeking is the universal background of the individual mental activity and the individual psychological structure. Behind the individual subject there is the universal subject, which pulsates through every mental activity of the individual subject.

I gave the example of the ocean behind the waves. The wave on the surface of the ocean may be regarded as an individual subject, but behind it and at the bottom of it is the universal subject which is the ocean. Control of the senses is nothing but making the wave subside into the ocean. You become a master of the universe in the same sense as the ocean is the master of all waters. How can a wave become master of the ocean? How can a subject control the whole cosmos? It cannot be done as long as the individual remains an individual, just as the wave cannot control the ocean because the wave is so small and the ocean so large. But when the wave subsides into the ocean, there is no wave at all; it has become the ocean. Then it has control over the whole ocean itself. The ocean controls itself, because there are no other persons or other factors to interfere with it.

The control of the cosmos is the control of the self, and vice versa, because this is a consequence of mastery over the

senses, the control of the mind. The control of the mind is the cessation of the activity of the mind in terms of objects, which is the same as control of the senses. Mental activity and sensory activity are inseparable, just as the foam and the minor ripples on the crest of the wave are a part of the wave, and when the wave subsides, the other forms – in the form of the ripples and crest, etc. – also subside into the ocean.

The individual subject cannot control the cosmos, it is true. But we are not talking about that. Yoga practice leads you to an experience which is beyond the bodily, individual, physical, subjective experience. You become a cosmic factor when you become a master of the mind and the senses. Mastery over the mind and the senses is the cessation of the activity of the mind and the senses. This is something inconceivable in the present circumstances of our life. But by a deep, dispassionate analysis we can understand what it could be. As I said, this can be experienced and explained only by analogies, comparisons, etc., and not by scientific argumentation, because science is only a method of investigating sensory phenomena and, at best, mental phenomena. But this is something supermental, super-sensory – *buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam* (Gita 6.21). It is capable of being grasped by the subtle intelligence, not by sensory activities and observations. Therefore, control of oneself is control of the cosmos in the sense that when you control the self, you cease to be an individual self. You become a power that is pervading the whole cosmos. You become *Antaryamin* yourself. To again give the example of the wave and the ocean, when a wave

subsides into the ocean, it becomes the ocean, and no more does it exist as an individual wave.

Thus, when emotions are subdued by the contemplation of the opposite of that factor which causes the emotions of affection and hatred, you assume a sort of mastery over yourself. And you also control the mind by another method, the second one I mentioned – the contemplation of the consequences or the effects of the control of the mind and the senses. You are not going to be a loser. You are going to be a gainer. This is what we have to teach the mind.

Why are we afraid of detachment and *vairagya*? We fear them because we think that we lose all centres of pleasure. “If I became a *virakta*, if I do not enjoy pleasures, I am going to be the loser.” But you are not going to be a loser in the same way, again to give an analogy, as when you wake up into the consciousness of the world from a dream enjoyment of an emperorship, you are not a loser. Suppose you are a king in dream. You have mastery over a vast kingdom, and you wake up suddenly from your dream; do you think you are a loser? “Oh, I was a king. Why did I wake up to this small Mr. so-and-so? This small Mr. so-and-so in the waking state is a better condition than my kingship in dream.” Which is better, to be a beggar in waking or to be a king in dream? It is better to be a beggar in waking because it is qualitatively a higher reality, though it is a beggar’s condition, than the qualitatively inferior condition of imagining a kingship in dream. All your enjoyments in this world are like dream enjoyments. They appear to be all right as long as they are there.

But you are not going to be a loser when you rise to a higher awakening, so do not be afraid of losing anything. All these pleasures of the world will be given to you in a real form. Sankaracharya gives an analogy, a comparison, in one of his minor works. When you are to enjoy a meal, you would like have the meal in its originality and not as a reflection. Suppose a lunch is reflected in a mirror and shown to you; you are not going to enjoy that meal. It is there; you can see all the items in the mirror, but you cannot enjoy it. You can try to grab it, but you cannot really grab it, because it is a reflection. The reflected enjoyment is not a real enjoyment. If you garland yourself in front of a mirror, do you garland the person in the mirror because it is seen there? You garland yourself outside the mirror; you do not garland the reflection. Just because you are seen there, it does not mean that you are there. Similarly, just because the objects are there outside, it does not mean that they are really there. They are somewhere else.

You are thoroughly mistaken in thinking that what you see is really there. It is not there in the same sense as you are not in the mirror. You are somewhere else. You are an invisible object. The person that is reflected in the mirror is invisible to one's own self. But the visible is not the real; the invisible is the real. So when you want to enjoy an object, do not go to that which is seen, because that which is seen is not there; it is somewhere else. Just as when you garland the invisible personality rather than the visible one reflected in a mirror, the reflected person is also automatically garlanded, when the original is beautified, the reflection is automatically beautified; when the original is satisfied, the reflection is also automatically satisfied, and when that

original Absolute is satisfied and contemplated, the whole world is satisfied.

Do not try to run after the objects of the world and try to please people in the world. They are only reflections of an original which is somewhere else. When you touch the bottom of things, the surface is automatically touched. To serve God is to serve all humanity. To please the Absolute is to please the whole of creation. All this is ethically described in a story in the Mahabharata, where it is said that when Sri Krishna Bhagavan took a leaf of vegetable from the vessel in which Draupadi used to cook her meal, the world was satisfied. This is because Sri Krishna represented the root of the cosmos, and when that was satisfied the entire tree of *samsara*, the whole creation, was satisfied. So do not be under the impression that when you are *virakta* or when you practise *vairagya*, self-discipline – when you detach yourself from objects of pleasure – you are going to be a loser. You are going to be an immense gainer by spiritual practice.

Thus, contemplation on the wonderful consequences of self-discipline and self-control allows the emotions of the satisfaction of the objects of sense to come down. The mind will come down automatically. “Oh, it is such a wonderful thing that I am going to get. I am going to be a great master, a magnificent being. Why should I be a silly person of this mortal world? I am going to be the great, magnanimous, magnificent wonder of creation by the practice of yoga.” When the mind is taught this lesson and told this, automatically the emotions of love and hatred, pleasure and pain subside. This is another method by which you can

control the emotions by operating upon the subtle causative base.

The third method is the entire sublimation by direct meditation, which is *abhyasa*. This is the real yoga. The sublimation of all emotions and mental activities of every kind is the direct practice of yoga. While the first stage is the control of emotions, the second stage is an attempt at the cessation of every mental activity, even the direct impersonal perception of things. You will not even be conscious of the existence of objects, let alone be attached or averse to them. *Abhyasa* is the outcome of *vairagya*. *Abhyasa* is real yoga, which is meditation on reality.

Tatpratiṣedhārtham ekatattva abhyāsaḥ (1.32) is Patanjali's *sutra*. To put an end to all mental *vrittis*, you have to concentrate on one reality. This one reality may be any one of your chosen concepts. The Ishta Devata, or the chosen deity, is the reality as far as you are concerned in the practice of yoga or *abhyasa*. What that reality is, what that Ishta Devata is, what that object of meditation is going to be, has to be selected in consultation with your Guru, who will initiate you into the method of meditation. I cannot discourse on meditation here in detail, as this is a very secret and subtle technique which varies from person to person, and it has to be received personally through initiation from a preceptor – which you should have, whatever be your advancement in spirituality.

The practice of yoga is meditation. In meditation, the mind fixes upon a given concept or an object, by which it is automatically abstracted by way of *pratyahara* from objects of sense. *Pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana* go together as a concentrated focus of mental activity. In *dhyana*, it is not

merely the conscious mind that functions. It is the whole of your personality that comes up and acts with a force of whatever you are in the base or bottom of your being. In intense pleasure and intense pain, the whole of your personality begins to act. Very rarely does your entire personality work in your life. Mostly you are only on a conscious level, but in meditation the whole psychological personality is brought up into a focussed attention on the object that has been chosen. Your whole being meditates. It is not your mind that thinks. Meditation is not merely thinking. It is much more an activity of your individuality and personality than you can think of. It is not thinking, willing, loving, and so on; it is something much more than that. It is the whole of the subjective activity of your becoming coordinated with the objective phenomenon in the form of creation. You contemplate the whole world through that object.

The image or the symbol that you use in meditation, therefore, is not a selected isolated object but a representation of the entire cosmos. A currency note represents governmental authority in economics and finance. A flag represents the nationality to which we belong, though the flag itself is not nationality; it is something else. Likewise, in meditation when you choose a symbol, it does not mean that you have chosen a false object. It is a representation of the power that is behind it. The whole cosmos is the ultimate object of meditation, but as you cannot think of it immediately, you choose only a representation of the cosmos, a single object. You cannot think of the whole ocean, so you think only of a single wave, and through the wave you can enter the ocean.

Likewise, through any object that you choose for the purpose of your meditation, you can enter all the objective phenomena by the gradual ascendance of the meditative processes.

In the *sutras* of Patanjali, various stages are described. *Savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savichara*, *nirvichara*, *sananda*, *sasmita*, etc., are called *samadhis*, or stages of meditation. These are nothing but stages by which the mind ascends into the higher ladders of objectivity from a single given concept or a form or an image to a wider and wider expression of it, until you reach the whole cosmos of the five elements and their subtle background in the form of the *tanmatras*, and go still higher into the *mahatattva*; and finally, *Isvaratattva* itself becomes the object of your meditation. The supreme omnipotent, omnipresent *Isvara*, the Lord of Creation, becomes the ultimate object of your meditation.

As I mentioned, these are all difficult techniques. But once you taste the beauty and the bliss of meditation, you will not leave it. You will not think of any object of sense afterwards, just as when you have tasted the delicious nectar of life, you will not go for a cup of coffee or tea because they are insipid compared to nectar. But you have not tasted it even once, and therefore mistake the pleasures of sense for the delights of life.

Again, I would advise you to be serious and honest in your practice, and God Himself will take the form of a Master, and the Guru and Guide comes to you unasked, and takes you by the hand to the higher stages of life. Gurus are not lacking in life. There are plenty of Gurus. As God is everywhere, Gurus are also everywhere. God is not a mere

concept, a theory or an idea in your mind. Let this foolish notion be swept off your mind. We do not love God. We cannot have real devotion to God, because still, till today at this present moment, God is only an idea before us, conjured up before our minds, while the world is a reality for us. God has to become the reality.

The object of your meditation is a reality. It is not an imagination of your mind, because the imagination cannot produce real results. If you want concrete results to follow from meditation, the object has to be a reality. For that you have to educate yourself, as I mentioned in the first session, into a new method altogether by which you have to rise from the world of phenomena to the world of noumena or reality.

Within these few days that you are in this ashram, it would be good that you sit for a while and think over the seriousness of this matter in your life. You do not know how many years more you will live in this world. You may not have a long lease of life before you. It may be a few years, a few months, a few days – nobody knows. And you do not know where you will go. All this is very serious indeed. Nothing can be more serious than this unknown future that is ahead of you. So make a decision of your future. Decide what is going to be the programme of your life tomorrow, and adjust your daily programme according to the programme of the life that is to follow. Cut short all unnecessary activities. Your daily programme should consist only of those items which are absolutely essential for the maintenance of your life socially and spiritually, and the cumulative effect of this day-to-day programme is the programme of your life.

When you leave this world one day, go with an asset. Remember that the people of this world are not going to help you when you are on your deathbed, when you are about to leave this world. Nothing will follow you – not your friends, not your family, not the wealth that you possess, not the status that you occupy in society, nothing of the kind. You go alone, unbefriended, and you do not know what will follow you.

The virtues and the vices of your actions today will follow you. Manu says in his Smritis that one alone is born, and one alone dies. You come alone, you go alone and you experience the pleasures and pains in this world alone. Nobody can come to share the miseries of your life. You alone have to swallow the bitter pill of life. Therefore, when you leave this world, the very same *samskaras* of your experience here, which you have gathered up by virtue or vice, will come to your aid. The objects of sense will not come. And do not think that those days are very far off. This is again the *maya* that is before you. It is not far off. At any moment, a grain of rice can stick in one's throat, and that may be the end. Anything can be the cause of death, and the next moment what happens to you? You do not know. It is a horror before you.

But you need not be horrified of it if you have been consciously living your life according to the canons of virtue, unselfishness and devotion to the Maker of all things. The devotion, the spiritual attitude that you have enshrined in your heart, the meritorious actions that you have performed in the form of philanthropy, charity, etc., the goodness that you have manifested in your life – that will follow you. The things of the world will not follow you

because when you enter another realm altogether after leaving this body, the laws of this world will not apply to that world, just as when you leave one country and go to another country, the laws of the country which you have left will not apply in the country into which you have entered.

There are various *lokas*, planes of existence, realms of experience, and when you die to this world you enter another realm, another *loka*, where another law altogether operates, and these social and ethical laws of this world will not apply there. And so you have to take note of the eternal law of the cosmos, not merely the tentative and apparent rules and regulations that you have socially created for your pleasures and enjoyments of the world.

The eternal law is *dharma*, *sanatana* as it is called. Follow the canons of eternal law, which will help you wherever you go. Whichever be the realm into which you enter after you leave this world, the eternal law which you have followed in this life will sustain you even there. The law of God, the law of the Absolute, the divine law is the eternal law.

Thus, by awakening ourselves into the realities of a higher life, we tread the path of spirituality and become blessed even in this very life. We live a really happy life in this world, and happy we duly become even in a future life. This is so because God is the determining factor. The law of the Absolute is the regulating principle of the life that we live in any *loka*, or any plane of existence. The planes of existence change; but the eternal principle – immanent, present, regulating our experiences in various *lokas* – does not change.

In conclusion, may I request you all to contemplate a little more profoundly than you have been doing up to this time, the realities of your life and the essentiality of living a truly spiritual life in the sense that spirituality is the expression of the spirit of the cosmos. It is not merely a joke that you are playing with life. It is not a hobby into which you are entering for diversion or enjoyment. It is the most serious factor that you can think of in your life, because that is the law Eternal, that is *satya*, that is *rita*, that is God Himself speaking to you in the form of law and discipline. Be a disciplined person, be a good person, be a spiritual person, be an aspirant of the Reality rather than the phenomena which pass before the eyes, which see them today and will not see them tomorrow.

Thus, be a child of God, a student of yoga, and live a life of blessedness wherein you will have the yogic experience of eternity and infinity blending together. Thus, you may be said to be in a state of *sahaja samadhi*, seeing the Truth everywhere, Reality everywhere. You will be in such a state of high meditation then that wherever the mind goes, you will be in a state of meditation because whatever the mind fixes itself upon, it will be observing Reality alone. In a forest, wherever you cast your eyes, you see only trees. In the ocean, wherever you cast your eyes, you see only water. In empty space, you see only space wherever you cast your eyes. In the same way, in a state of intense meditation, wherever you cast your glance, you see the flood of eternity, the Vishvarupa, inundating you from within and without. This is spirituality. This is yoga. God bless you.

Chapter 6

THE PROCESS OF MEDITATION

In meditation we deal with the object more effectively than when we think of objects in ordinary life. I can think of you in one way from the point of view of daily concourse and the business of life, but my thought of you in meditation is altogether different.

As I mentioned in the previous session, meditation is not thinking. It is not a social communication that we establish with objects. In sensory and social contacts, objects are looked upon as one of the units of the external world. They are judged and dealt with in a purely empirical manner. An object, when we look upon it socially and empirically, exists as a point in space occupying a location as a physical body. It has also a location in the passage of time. And thirdly, it has a definition, a quality or a characteristic.

Whenever we think of an object, these three associations come into operation even without our thinking of them. An object can be only at one place; it cannot be at two places at the same time. And an object can be only at a particular moment of time; it cannot simultaneously occupy temporal locations of past, present and future. Also, it is impossible to think of an object without its having some sort of a relation with other objects. This is how we look upon things usually – with a physical location, a quantity, and a mass. Every object, physically speaking, has this three-dimensional character – a structure of length, breadth, and height. It is inseparable also from the passage

of time. We exist in a place and in a time simultaneously. We are here and we are now. These are inseparable associations of an object. Space-time causal relationship of an object is inseparable from the object.

This gives us an impression that we are not judging an object properly, giving it due respect, but only defining it through extraneous characters which need not necessarily belong to it. To define an object as something occupying a particular space or existing in a particular moment of time, or as bearing relationship with other things, is not to define it independently. This is what is usually called the definition by accidental characters, or *tatastha lakshana*. Accidental attributes are characters which are foisted upon the object only for the time being, just as when we say that such and such a person is a district collector or a prime minister. This is not an essential definition of the object, because one cannot be a district collector or hold an office always. Any kind of definition by way of qualities or characters which are only temporarily obtained is called *tatastha lakshana*, or an accidental qualification workable in the utilitarian world but not an essential attribute or the substantiality of the object.

In meditation we are to hit upon the substantiality of the thing rather than its externally associated characters. The object may be in one place; that is quite all right. But the question is: What is that object which is in that particular place? Therefore, there is no use defining the object as something which is in that place. We have to dissociate the object from its temporal and spatial associations, and also its three-dimensional character, because when we probe deeply into the structure of an

object, we will realise that objects are not three-dimensional. They appear to be so on account of their location in space and in time. Whenever space and time get associated with an object, that object appears to be three dimensional; but inasmuch as we cannot look upon an object as independent of its association with space and time, we also cannot conceive of an object independent of the three-dimensional character. We cannot think of any object which has not this character of three-dimensionality.

As they say, reality is four-dimensional. Nobody can think of that fourth dimension because other than length, breadth and height, we cannot conceive of a geometrical character of an object. But we are told today that there is such a thing as the fourth dimension, which is supposed to be not merely the time association with the object independent of the spatial association, but a blending of the spatial and temporal characters simultaneously.

We separate space and time in our judgment of things. We always speak of space *and* time, and conceive of them as two different relationships or defining characteristics of an object. This is the limitation of thinking. There are certain fundamental restrictions in the way of thinking itself, which stultifies all the processes of logical understanding. Logic is a process of thinking by which we separate the defining character, called the predicate, from that which is defined, or the subject. This is very interesting. It is something like breaking the leg of a person and then trying to join the broken parts. Why do we break the leg at all and then have to call for a bonesetter?

Logic has this intrinsic defect of separating the subject from the predicate – not in the grammatical sense, but in a

logical sense. Logic isolates the quality, or the adjective, from the substantive, and then tries to define the substantive in terms of the adjective. This is the reason why Truth as it is cannot be known by logic. Reality as such is incomprehensible through logical understanding because logic has a defect of isolating the subject and the predicate. But Reality is that which is universal and all-comprehensive. It has to comprehend within its substantiality all the adjectives as not in any way separate from it, but as inseparable from it. Such an object is inconceivable to us because we are restricted to the operations of the mind in space and time.

In meditation, we try to be beyond these limitations of conception of an object, and try to hit upon the object as it is in itself. These technical methods are described in some of the sections of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and also in certain other philosophical meditation scriptures. When we try to conceive of an object in meditation, we regard it as a spatio-temporal something. It may be an image, a *murti*, a *vigraha*, a painted picture, a diagram drawn on a wall or on the floor, or it can even be a mental concept. Whatever be the form of the object of meditation, it has this limiting character of being in space-time, and causally related to other objects.

Patanjali, in his very pointed definition of the object of meditation, tells us that we have to gradually raise the mind from the conception of the object to the apprehension of the object as it is. It is the realisation of the object rather than a mere thinking of it in terms of relationships. This is something which we are not accustomed to in our usual way of thinking. Patanjali tells us that when we define an

object, we bring in three factors together. One is the idea of the object, the notion of the object, the thought of the object, the consciousness of the object – whatever we may call it. The other is the name that we give to it. ‘Cow’ is a name that we give to a particular kind of animal. The cow itself may not know that it is called a cow. Somebody else calls it by the name cow. Likewise, we have appellations or epithets associated with various objects. The moment the word ‘tree’ is uttered, a particular form is conjured up in our mind; and the effect of these words upon our mind is such that it may mean even life and death to us. For instance, praise and censure are nothing but a jumble of words, but these words have such an impact upon our mind that we may even wage war merely because of certain words uttered, sounds that have been created in the air. These sounds, these words, these appellations have become a part of the normal way of thinking.

When a child is born, there is a naming ceremony. It is an introduction to the *samsaric* life of the world – one more addition of bondage. Previously the child had no name. When we give an additional restricting factor, “You shall be known only by this appellation, and anything else is not you,” we are restricting the operation of the child’s mind by giving it a name. And we restrict the operation of their minds in many other ways also, by social restrictions of different types. The name is associated with the object as much as the idea is associated with the object. The idea of the cow and the name cow is associated with the cow as it is in itself. We have to make a distinction between the substance called the cow independent of the name that we have given to it and the notion that we have about it. For

the time being, we can distinguish the cow from the name that has been given to it; but if no name is given to it, we cannot even think it. The moment we think of the animal or even see it, the name also gets associated with it.

One of the efforts in meditation is to dissociate the object from its name. This requires hard effort because we have been taught from our childhood that everything has a name, and this name becomes a part of the object itself due to social habit. But now the mind has to be trained in a different manner of thinking, so that we are able to think of the cow as it was before it was named for the first time in creation. What is a child before it is named? It is still a child. It is a human being, and it has all the characteristics of anything that is worthwhile in the human world, so it should be capable of being thought independent of the name with which it is associated.

While the dissociation of the object from its name is difficult enough, more difficult is the dissociation of the notion of it from its substantiality. This is a higher stage in meditation, and almost impossible for ordinary persons. The notion of the object – the thought or the mentation of the object – has two different layers of connotation. The thought of the object can be purely psychological, and it can also be physical association. The psychological association of the mind with the object is something to which I made reference in an earlier session as the emotional contact which we have with the object: that object belongs to me, or it does not belong to me; it is mine or not mine; it has such and such a value in my personal life, and so on.

The psychological association of the object with our personal life is the first thing to be dealt with in meditation. That is to say, it has to be isolated from these psychological associations. If the object does not belong to me, what is it independently? Or, if it has no personal relationship with me at all, what could that object be? Such contemplation would be an attempt at an independent appreciation of the object. This independent appreciation is the beginning of a higher kind of meditation, far superior to the one in which we tried to dissociate the object from the name associated with it.

Now, this is the apprehension of the object without defining it through emotional associations. We should be able to give a definition of the object independent of its relationship with us – or rather, independent of any kind of human relationship. Can we give a definition of an object without associating it with somebody else in the world? That would be a very great advance that we make in meditation on the object.

But apart from the psychological association which the object may have, it has a physical association. This is still more difficult to conceive. The world of objects is a network of relations. This is the philosophy of the Buddha and of Buddhism – the philosophy of the momentariness of all things. Everything in the world is a flow, a current, or a process of forces which join together at certain locations of space and time to give an impression of stability of the object. It is very difficult to understand this philosophy of Buddha. It is not Buddha's philosophy merely; it is everybody's philosophy. Even modern physical science has accepted it. The objects of the world are not stable

substances, but collocations of forces which impinge on a particular spot in space and a moment in time by certain factors which are beyond the comprehension of the human mind, and give us the notion or the appearance of stability.

I have oftentimes given the example of a cinematographic picture to substantiate this view of the momentariness and the processional character of the objects of the world. The picture that we see in a cinema is not a stable picture; it is a moving process. We are told that at least sixteen pictures run in every second of time, but we cannot see it. If we see a person on the screen standing still for one minute, it does not mean that we are seeing only one picture. Many pictures have rushed past us during that one minute, but we have not been able to observe the process of the movement of the pictures on account of the incapacity of our eyes to catch up with the speed of their movement. It is a defect of our eyes. But if our eyes were made in such a way as to catch up with the speed of the film, then we would not be able to enjoy the cinema because we would see every picture jumping. Likewise, we are told that the objects of the world are processions of forces. We may call them atomic forces or electronic energies, or whatever we may call it. Buddha never used such terms; he simply called them momentary processes of objectivity. Today we are calling them energies, atomic forces, electronic processes, etc., but they mean one and the same thing.

The objects of the world are not stable points. For instance, if a powerful microscope is used to observe a person's body, we will not be able to see them in the same way. Perhaps we do not have such a powerful microscope

that can probe into the processes that are taking place in the body. For example, we will never be able to see the beauty of a person or of a painted picture if they are looked at with the powerful lens of a microscope which will magnify it a million times. We will see cells rapidly moving in various ways, and it will appear as a colony of bodies rather than a single body. If a human body is seen through a powerful microscope, we will see it as a colony of forces, an assembly or a society of cells, rather than a single person. There is no single person. The person does not exist. A society is not a single body; it is made up of many elements and units, though we call society a body for legal purposes. Likewise, for legal purposes we may say it is a body, but really it is not a body; it is only a society of cells. But if we go deeper into the structure of the cell, we will find that even the cell is a society of finer forces. The cell is not a unit or a substance. So the body is gone; it does not exist. This is not the case merely with the human body, but with everything in the world, animate or inanimate. The whole world is a movement of forces rapidly rushing towards some destination of which we are not aware at present.

Therefore, the object that we think of is not a real object. Ultimately it is only a network of relations, in which our personality also has been included. We have contributed our might in creating this apprehension of the stability of an object. Umpteen factors join together to constitute the notion of the stability of an object. So, while the name of the object has to be separated from the object, the stability or the substantiality – the physical location of the object as it appears to us – is also to be dissociated from the object as it is in itself. When we come to this stage of

meditation, the object will look like a universal mass focussed at a single point.

Image worship, or *murti puja*, etc., are sometimes condemned by people who do not understand the religious motives behind them. They say God is not in images, He is everywhere. These are all false notions. God is everywhere and, therefore, He is also in images. It is very clear. But, it is not merely that. It is not merely a humorous definition that we give of the image; it is a higher reality that we are contemplating through the object. Inasmuch as every object is a point of the union or the commingling of universal forces to form that point of network giving the notion or the idea of the stability of that object, through that object we can enter the whole cosmos. If we touch any part of the ocean, we have touched the whole ocean. If I touch the shore of the Arabian Sea near Bombay, I am touching the waters of the Atlantic, because they are one. So if we touch an object, we have touched the whole cosmos; and if we focus our attention on the structure of any image in our meditation, we have brought universal forces into operation.

This is, again, to enter into more deep and interesting facts about meditation. When we are advanced enough in meditation, we will begin to encounter many problems and difficulties. In the initial stages, we will have no difficulty. It will look as if we are progressing very well, because we have not even disturbed the location of the object. The mind that meditates is not powerful enough to touch the substance of the object. So in ordinary meditation we are only in a fool's paradise, as it were, imagining that we see visions, lights, etc. We will have no difficulties; everything will look all

right. But when we disturb the location of the object by bombarding it with a thought of meditation, then the constituents of the object get separated. The very tendency of the object's constituents to get separated from its name and notional association will bring into operation universal forces which have been responsible for the object's substantiality or its apparent spatio-temporal location. Then it is that various Devatas, as they say, come to put obstacles before us. Indra and others supposedly impede our meditation, as we may have read in the Epics and Puranas. This Indra and others are nothing but cosmic forces which are responsible for maintaining the location of the object – trying to maintain its location as against our attempt to disintegrate that object into a cosmic pervasive substance.

These are personal experiences which a meditator oftentimes has to face, and they bear an intimate relation to the submerged desires of the meditator. It is not that we go to meditate entirely free from *vasanas* or *samskaras*. We have many unfulfilled desires even now. Though some desires might have been fulfilled, there are some *samskaras*, or unseen potencies of desires, in our subconscious mind and even below, which come to conscious activity when we have no other work to do and when there is no other effort at the fulfilment of a desire. When we will not fulfil a desire, all the desires take to reaction.

In advanced stages of meditation, two types of reaction are set up – the objective reaction from the cosmic forces themselves, and the subjective reaction from the potencies of desires that are lying unseen and unfelt in the recesses of our own personality. So when we enter into deep

meditation, we have to be prepared to meet these encountering powers within as well as without. If we read the lives of saints, great masters who practised yoga and underwent the hardships of meditation, we will know what these hardships could be. They never leave a person, whatever be his advance.

In the Srimad Bhagavata, a great warning is given to us: "Apart from the great Rishi Narayana, which created being can be said to be immune to the forces of desire? Which created being has not been affected by the charms of the world?" The charms of the world, the beauties of things, the values that we see in the objective world will take action against us if we do not deal with them in a proper manner. The objects of the world are not harmless entities that are unconnectedly stationed in some point in space. Ultimately, everything is connected with us. They now look like independent objects unrelated to us, but in deeper thought we will realise that at the bottom they are connected with us psychologically, physically and intellectually.

The object of meditation is, thus, a very interesting thing. It is not as simple as it appears. In the beginning, it is merely a chosen object or a concept – Ishta-Devata. In the beginning, the Ishta-Devata is only an idea in the mind with a name associated with it. Afterwards this Ishta-Devata gets dissociated from the name and becomes only a thought of the mind. Later on it is separated even from the thought and looked upon as something existing by itself, independently. Now we go further and try to relate the object in its basic structure with the other objects of the

world, inasmuch as all the objects are processes of the universe.

The universe is a process, and not an existing stable object. That is why it is called *samsara* in Sanskrit. *Samsara* is a processional movement of forces. *Samsara* moves; it does not simply exist like a stable mountain, unrelated and unconnected to the passage of time. Everything is a movement from one end of things to another end, together with which we also move. The whole universe evolves from stage to stage until it comes to the Self-realisation of itself. It is the calling of God which is called evolution ultimately. The Absolute, or the Supreme Principle, summons every objective phenomenon to itself. The world cannot rest in itself because it has isolated itself from its centre. The movement of all things to their original universal centre is evolution, whether it is organic evolution or inorganic evolution. The world is restless merely because of the fact that it has turned away from its centre. And meditation is an attempt to move towards the centre.

While by the force of the movement of evolution we are dragged towards the centre and we may be taken to the centre one day or the other, yoga is a consciously directed deliberate process of compressing the process of evolution into a lesser number of years and going through all these requisite experiences in a compressed period of time. We may be able to experience ages of our life in one span of life itself, provided the meditation is strong enough. Examples are given, such as the piercing of the layers of lotus petals. We may have one thousand petals kept one over the other, but to pierce through these petals with a needle, how much time would it take? One thousand petals kept one over the

other can be pierced by a needle in no time, yet the needle has passed gradually from one petal to another. It is not an instantaneous action of the needle, but a gradual process. So, even if we compress all our lives into a single life by the power of meditation, we pass through experiences one after another, though they may look like a sudden and instantaneous activity of the mind bringing about all these experiences.

The power of meditation entirely depends upon the clarity of our concept of the object and the purpose for which we meditate. At least these two factors should be clear to the mind. Why do we meditate, and what is it on which we are to meditate? Why have we chosen this particular object for meditation in contrast with the other things that could have been chosen? This is the specification of the *Ishta Devata*, or the chosen ideal. When we have chosen the ideal, we must be clear about it wholly, comprehensively, so that the mind may not be in need of taking to another recourse afterwards. When we have chosen an object, we have chosen it forever, because ultimately it matters little what we have chosen. As I mentioned, any object is as good as any other object because all objects are compressed locations of universal forces and, therefore, through that particular object we can enter the universal, whatever that object be. Hence, it is no use bothering too much about the necessity to change the object of concentration or meditation once it has been chosen, especially when it has been given to us in initiation by our Guru or by an adept.

Also, it must be clear as to why we meditate. The 'why' is answered by the *mumukshutva* aspect of the aspiration. It

is for the liberation of the spirit that we practice meditation, and not merely to acquire powers. The purpose of meditation is not merely to attain some peace of mind socially, as many people think. It is not the attainment of social peace that is the purpose of meditation, though that will also be a consequence which will come upon us when we advance in meditation.

The meditator is not an individual, isolated from the other related factors in the world. We become more and more aware of our internal relationship with others when we go deeper and deeper into meditation. It is something like going deeper into the ocean. The deeper we go, the more we realise the oneness of waters. Likewise, when we go profoundly into the object of meditation, we get related to the object in such a way that we will not know whether the object is meditating on us, or we are meditating on the object. This is beautifully described in one *sutra* of Patanjali: *kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijatasya iva maṇeḥ grahīṭṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ* (1.41). He calls this *samāpatti*, or achievement. Meditational achievement is that grand state of consciousness or experience in which we go above the notion of a pure meditator standing isolated from the object of meditation.

But the consciousness of the meditator influences the object to such an extent that the object assumes a form of consciousness itself. As it is also said, it is something like a red-hot iron ball. When an iron ball is heated red hot, it becomes fire itself for all practical purposes. The fire is the consciousness; the iron ball is the object. When the object is heated by consciousness in meditation, the object assumes the form of consciousness, gets charged with it, and we do

not know whether the object is meditating on the subject or the subject is thinking of the object. One is reflected in the other. It is like two crystals brought near each other, each crystal reflecting in the other. When two crystals are mutually reflected, we do not know which is reflected in what. In some temples an image is kept between two mirrors so that an illusion is created that there are infinite images on either side. It is mutual reflection of images. One image is reflected in the other, so that there is an idea of infinity, as it were. Likewise, the consciousness that is meditating charges the object with such intensity that the object assumes a conscious status, reflecting the subject in itself, while at the same time the object is also being reflected in consciousness.

And here we are mutually related with the objective world. This is also because of the fact that in this stage of mutual reflection of the object and the subject, the world forces have come together in a meeting, as it were, to collaborate with the liberation of the forces of the object, and the object becomes the whole cosmos. It is not that we are meditating only on an image or a small idol in our temple or house. We have now come to a stage where the universal forces have come to the location of our *vigraha*, or image; and having liberated the forces constituting that object, they themselves become the object of our meditation. We enter into the Viratsvarupa, as it were. Perhaps this is the vision of the Virat that the Epics speak of. Arjuna is supposed to have seen that Virat. Virat is nothing but the whole cosmos being presented to consciousness at one stroke. It is at one stroke because it is beyond time, and it is universal because it is beyond space.

It has become universal merely because the location of the object has been blasted, as we blast an atom to release atomic energy. And then, the object has merged with the other objects of the world.

All objects are made of similar process or forces. Every object is made of the same force, but they look different – just as *puris* look different from *chapatis*, *chapatis* look different from *halva*, etc., though everything is made up of flour. The substance is the same. The substance of all objects is the same, but they look different on account of the various intensities of permutation and combination of forces. We can paint various pictures by using only three colours. It may be Rama, it may be Krishna, it may be a bird, it may be a living body, or it may be an inorganic object; a wonderful panorama of diversity can be drawn with only three colours.

In a similar manner, the forces of the universe have joined together to give us an impression of variegated objects of the world. When we blast one object, we have blasted the very objectivity of things, and then we enter into the forces that constitute all objects. This is, perhaps in one way, the vision of God because we begin to see the structure of all things simultaneously brought before our consciousness, not as an individual's activity independently, but as an indescribable expanse where the object that we have been meditating upon becomes entirely inseparable from the subject of our meditation. Here we no more exist as a meditating person. We are not individuals any more. We have become a part of the society of the universe. Then it is that the guardians of the cosmos are supposed to take care of us.

In the Yoga Vasishtha, Vasishtha speaks to Rama: “When you attain to such a state of meditation, you will be taken care of and protected by the world forces. Guardians of the cosmos will take care of you.” That is, we will have no fear afterwards. We need not take care of ourselves and protect ourselves. We will not require a bodyguard. The world will take care of us, because we become citizens of the world. When we become citizens of a country, the laws of that country will take care of us.

Now we have become citizens of a wider world, and so the world forces will take care of us – nay, God Himself takes care of us directly. This is what is meant by the verse of the Gita: *ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate teṣām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham* (9.22) – all our needs will be taken care of without our asking for them. Everything will be wonderful. We will be surprised at these miraculous occurrences in our lives, and we will not know how they are happening. Everything will be miracle after miracle. Our thoughts will begin to materialise, and the words that we utter will start taking effect. Even unconscious thoughts that occur in our minds will materialise. No desire will go unfulfilled, because here our desires are pious desires – *satyakama*, *satya sankalpah*, as the Upanishad tells us. At this stage our desires are not earthly or mortal desires. They are desires of Truth – *satyakama*. Our desire is for Truth, and the will of Truth manifests itself here; and so, everything manifests itself suddenly.

This is yoga *siddhi*, the perfection in yoga that we attain, not because we have desired these *siddhis*, but because they have to come inasmuch as we have become a part or

constituent of the world. *Siddhi* is nothing but our cooperation with the forces of nature, so it is not a miracle that is taking place; it is quite natural. When we go from one realm to another realm, we begin to see the miracles of those realms, and we do not call it a miracle at all. Because we cannot understand it, we call it a wonder; but when it is understood and the laws operating behind these miracles are known, then they are just natural occurrences.

Rainfall is a miracle for a child. How does water suddenly fall from the skies? But we know very well that it is a scientific fact, and there is no miracle about it. The movement of the stars, the solar system and the astronomical laws are all miracles for a child. It cannot understand how these things happen at all. But they are not miracles. When the sun sets in the west, how does the sun suddenly rise in the east every morning? This is a miracle for children, but they are not miracles to us because we have understood the laws that operate. Thus, *siddhis* are not miracles. There is no such a thing as miracle at all. It is all nature working in different layers and levels of activity.

Hence, when the mind has touched the fringe of truth in deep meditation, the laws of truth, *satya dharma*, manifest themselves. *Tat tvam pūṣan apāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye* (15), is the prayer of the Isavasya Upanishad: "O Sun of suns, reveal to me your essentiality by withdrawing your rays and lifting the golden lid, Hiranmaya-patra, which is the attractive form of the world." The attractions of the world are the golden lid covering the essential truth at the bottom of it. These attractions cease automatically when they cease to be objects of perception.

Thus, we have a grand purpose and goal before us in yoga *sadhana*. Wonderful, *ascharya*, is this yoga *sadhana* itself. The Kathopanishad says that when this is spoken to us, we look upon it as a miracle indeed. What a wonder is this! Can such a thing be possible? Can it exist at all? The speaking of it is a wonder, the hearing of it is a wonder, and the realisation of it is a wonder. But it is not a wonder, really speaking; it is the Truth of truths. *Satyasa satyam*, the Real of reals is That. And towards That we are heading, sometimes consciously and sometimes without our knowing it.

For this purpose, we have to gird up our loins. This is the goal of life. We are born for this purpose, and are not here for enjoying. The Manu Smriti says that we are not here for enjoying the objects of the world. It is not for the sake of sensory titillation that we are here. Our birth is for intense austerity and struggle for the sake of that infinite enjoyment that will come upon us one day or the other. Pūrṇam adaḥ, pūrṇam idam, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate: Fullness will be your goal; from fullness you move to fullness. Wonderful fullness and completeness, a flood of illumination is awaiting us.

Therefore, this is our duty whether we are *grahastas*, *brahmacharins*, *vanaprasthas* or *sannyasins*. Whatever our social classification be, our duty is one. The *varnashrama dharma* – the classification of society into groups of actions according to *guna* and karma – and various other duties that we perform in various walks of life, are towards this realisation. All our sweat and toil is for this purpose. All our studies, the education that we undergo, the duties that we

perform, the services that we do, the cries and sobs of life, are for this purpose. There is no other goal of life.

Thus, various methods have to be employed to bring us into focus towards this realisation by *sadhana*, an outline of which I mentioned in previous sessions. By *svadhya*, by *japa*, by *satsanga*, by austerity, by *tapas* and by prayer to God, we have to bring ourselves into a focus for this purpose. We are dissipated and distracted in our attention. Our personalities are thrown pell-mell. The layers of our personality are not aligned; they go in different directions. When the mind thinks something and the feelings go in another direction, there is a psychological rift in our personality. All these diversifications of our personality have to be focused into a single point of concentration for success in life. Knowledge and action should go together.

All the duties in our life are the activities that we perform in life. These activities should be backed with knowledge of the goal of life. When knowledge is lacking, activity becomes empty and bereft of purpose. This is symbolically told to us in the last verse of the Gita: *yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārho dhanur-dharaḥ, tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama (18.78)*. Knowledge and action should go together. Krishna and Arjuna should sit in the same chariot. Sri Krishna and Arjuna sitting in the same chariot is nothing but the blending of understanding and action, God and man working together in unison. We are also told of two birds perched on the same tree of *samsara*. *Isvara* and *jiva* work together, and they act together. And when *Isvara-sakti* commingles with human effort, there shall be success – *tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama*.

Chapter 7

THE SPIRIT OF SADHANA

You have come here in order to gain something. A lot of knowledge has been gathered, and this is now going to be your guiding light and the outline of your daily conduct and practice. When you go back home, you go filled with a new confidence, a confidence that gets gradually diluted as the days pass. It is essential, therefore, to recharge yourself like a self-charging battery by a daily reconsideration of these lessons and a reinforcement of these aspects of learning and knowledge which have been imparted to you by learned men, by *sadhakas* and *mahatmas*.

The first and foremost of truths that we have to bear in mind is that the central aim of life is the realisation of God. It is the end and the purpose of our life. This end is of such a nature that it determines at every step of our practice the means that we adopt for the realisation of this goal. This end, this destination that is before us, is not like a distant place that we are going to reach after some years, a place which is practically unconnected with the journey that we are undertaking and the place from which we began. This goal before us is vitally connected with the journey that we are undertaking, and is also very intimately related to us from the very first step that we take.

The journey on the path of the spirit is like the growth of the human body. It is not like walking to Badrinath or undertaking a train journey to a distant place. The journey that we undertake through a vehicle or the distance that we cover on foot is quite different from the way in which we

approach God. I give you the example of the growth of the human body to its perfection. We know the difference between the relationship that one place has with another place and the relationship that a child has with the condition or stage of the adult which it is to reach by a gradual organic growth of its personality. The child and the adult are not two different persons, while Rishikesh and Badrinath are two different places. When we walk from Rishikesh to Badrinath, we cover a distance between two places. But this covering of distance between two places is methodologically different from the distance that a child covers between itself and the stage of the adult.

The child becomes the adult; it grows into the adult. In one sense, we can say there is an evolution of the child into the adult. The childhood condition grows into the condition of the adult. While the adult condition is the goal of the condition of the child, and the process of the growth of the child into the state of the adult may be regarded as the journey of the childhood stage to the stage of the adult – or in another sense we may say the distance between the stage of the child and the condition of the adult is covered by the process of the evolution of the childhood stage – it is in another sense we speak of the covering of the distance between Rishikesh and Badrinath.

The distance that we cover between our mortal state of humanity and the state of Godhood is not like walking from Rishikesh to Badrinath. Most of religious people have this notion in our minds. We have to go to Brahmaloaka, Vaikuntha, Kailasa after death. We reach the Father in heaven, who is in the distant realm beyond, which is something like going to New York or to the moon. We have

still a conception of covering space or distance in terms of miles when we think of reaching God. Vaikuntha is very far, many millions of miles away from this place. This is our concept. We may be educated persons, having read many scriptures and listened to discourses by saints and sages, but this peculiar notion of distance between us and God does not leave us: God is far away from us in space, many miles far off, as one place is far off from another place, and going to God is something like going from Rishikesh to Badri. Not so! It is not like that. In our *sadhana*, this false notion has to be shed at the very outset.

God is the goal of our life in the same way as the adult is the goal of the child. He is not the goal of our life as Badrinath is the goal of the pedestrian walking from Rishikesh. We know the difference very well, and we know also how far God is from us. How far is the adult from the child – how many miles? We cannot conceive this distance in terms of miles. The adult is not so many miles away from the child. As a matter of fact, the spatial measurement in terms of distance is inapplicable in the case of the measurement of the difference between the adult and the child or the childhood condition from the condition of the adult. The adult is implicit in the child. The adult is not something that comes out of the child as something different. As the adult is immanent in the child – implicit, latent, patent in the child – or, in another way, we may say that tree is in the seed, God is in us.

So when we have to reach God through the practice of *sadhana*, we have to adopt the same means as a child adopts when growing into an adult. It is not to go from place to place. For the child to become the adult, it has not

to move in a vehicle; it has not to purchase a ticket; it has not to walk in space. It has to grow within itself into a new condition of experience, because that goal of God-realisation is already here. It is not away. It cannot be walked to. In all the expositions of Acharya Sankara particularly, he was never tired of repeating this one important point that God is not reached as a place is reached by walking.

The reaching of God by a *sadhaka*, or a student of yoga, is not like the reaching of a village or a town by walking or moving towards it by means of a vehicle. It is like growing into a new type of experience. Or, it is like waking from sleep. How far is the waking condition from the dream condition? How many miles distance? If we are to measure the distance between the condition of dream in which we are and the waking into which we have to rise, how many miles apart are they? I will give you a third example. We have gone to sleep. We are asleep on a bed in Sivananda Ashram, and suddenly we have an experience that we have flown by jet to New York City. We have gone away. We are many miles away from the place where we are sleeping. It is very clear that we have gone thousands of miles away and are now in New York. But how far is that New York from the bed on which we are sleeping? How many miles away? For all practical purposes it is some thousands of miles away, but really how far is it from the bed on which we are sleeping? It is not away at all; it is just there. The New York City to which we had flown is just there on our bed. It is not many miles away. So is God far away from us. He looks like millions and millions of miles away in the same way as the dream New York is away from the bed on which we are

sleeping, or as the adult is far away from the child from which it has to grow.

This new concept into which I will try to introduce your minds is different from the usual man-in-the-street concept of God being spatially distant from us. God is not spatially distant. He is not even away temporally. Even in time, He is not in a future. Just as in space He is not an outside object, even as the dream New York is not spatially away from the bed on which we are sleeping, even as the adult is not spatially away from the childhood, likewise, even from the point of view of time God is not in the future. He is not a future because that so-called futurity of God-experience is hidden in the present of human experience. Can we say that the waking experience is a future to the dream experience? It is not so, because the waking is the cause for our dream experience. The waking impressions have been the motive force behind our experience of dream. In a sense we may say the waking mind envelopes everything that we experience in dream. In and out, the waking mind is in the dream mind. The dream experience is an expression of the waking mind which has separated itself into the experiencer and the experienced, the subject and the object; and all the panorama, the variety that we have in dream, is indwelt by the waking mind. So when we have awakened into the waking world from the condition of dream, something else has not been introduced into our experience. The waking mind has merely withdrawn the aberration of its activity in the form of objects of dream, absorbed all the objects into itself, and the vast world of dream has gone into our heads once again when we wake up into a new consciousness of *jagrata avastha*.

God-experience is not, therefore, a distance to be covered in space. It is also not a future; it is not a tomorrow. It is an infinity and an eternity – feeble words that we are using to express the inexplicable. We have no words to explain what is going to take place. We are carrying God with us wherever we go, just as the child carries the adult condition in it wherever it moves.

Contemplate on this condition for a few seconds. You will not be able to think. Your mind will stop thinking. To be God or to have God-experience is to grow from humanity into a condition which is already implicit here, as the adult condition is implicit in the childhood condition. So it is a growth personally into a more mature state of experience rather than a moving in space. Everything seems to be in our hands now. Just as when the child moves into the condition of the adult it grows in every respect – in strength, in understanding and in the comprehensiveness of its experience – similarly, when we move towards Divinity, we grow comprehensively in every respect.

Inasmuch as it is difficult to explain all these things in language, scriptures give us only metaphors, analogies and comparisons. That which is divine and godly cannot be explained with language of the mortal tongue. Everything is explained in an epic style and in a Puranic language of image, art and comparison. The various stages of growth into greater and greater experiences of comprehensiveness are described in some of the Upanishads. Every day the child grows. Tomorrow's child is not today's child, and yet it is the same child. Tomorrow's child is different from today's child in the sense that its mind has grown into greater maturity of comprehension and

comprehensiveness. Likewise, tomorrow's *sadhaka* is not today's *sadhaka*, though it is the same *sadhaka* from another angle of vision.

Humanity has to grow into a different state of experience. We do not know how many stages we have to pass through but, broadly speaking, the Upanishads give us an idea of the stages of growth that we have to undergo. We have come from the lower stages to the stage of humanity. According to the scheme of evolution, from inanimate matter experiences rise to the plant kingdom, and higher up we grow into animal life, and from animal life we have come to the consciousness of manhood – humanity, or *manavata*.

But from the state of humanity there are higher stages still into which we have to grow. These are symbolically described in the Upanishads as the stages of Gandharvas, Pitris, Devas, etc. In knowledge and happiness, in power and comprehensiveness, the condition of the Gandharvas is supposed to be one hundred times greater than the condition of man. The Gandharvas are a hundred times more happy, a hundred times more intelligent, a hundred times more powerful and a hundred times more inclusive in their experience than humanity.

A hundred times more than the Gandharvas in every respect are the Pitris. A hundred times more than the Pitris in every respect are the Devas or celestials. Do not make the mistake of thinking that the celestials are up above. They are up above as the adult is up above the child. It is only a higher experience into which we are rising. A hundred times more comprehensive than the Devas is Indra, the ruler of the gods. His knowledge, his happiness, his

independence of spirit, his power, all these are one hundred times more than the Devas whom he rules. A hundred times more than Indra is Brihaspati, in every respect – knowledge, power and happiness. A hundred times more than Brihaspati is Prajapati, Brahma the Creator, Hiranyagarbha or Virat, whatever we call it.

Beyond that the mind cannot go, even in symbolic explanation. The Supreme Absolute is non-mathematically related to these conditions. It is not a hundred times merely, nor a million times, in the same sense as the waking experience is not merely a hundred times more than the dream experience, mathematically. It is a quite different thing altogether in quality. The happiness that we have in waking life is not mathematically multiplied by a factor to raise it above the dream happiness. We know how different waking experience is from dream experience. We cannot simply multiply it mathematically; it is quite different in quality in every respect. Similarly, the experience of the Absolute cannot be graded in this way by the multiplication of factors.

All these stages through which we have to pass are not a spatial rising, though they look like a spatial rising. They may look like the rise of consciousness from one world to another world, but they are worlds within the experience which is inseparable from our consciousness.

Now you know how you have to conceive God-realisation as the goal of your life. It is man rising to the state of superman, *manava* becoming *atimanava*, the seed growing into the tree, the child becoming the adult, the dream arising into waking experience, the relative merging into the Universal, the individual growing into the

Absolute, the particular rising to the all-comprehensive Virat.

Hence, what is the *sadhana* that we have to practice to achieve this state? Every stage is a completeness by itself. Every day the child is a completeness by itself. It is not a partiality. It is not that today it is a half child, tomorrow it becomes a three-fourths child and so on, and after some days it becomes a whole child. We do not say that. Every day it is a whole child; and yet, tomorrow's child is not today's child. The wholeness differs every day; from a lesser wholeness it has grown into a greater wholeness. It is not a fraction of a child growing into a bigger fraction; it is not a one-sixteenth child becoming larger in size in a mathematical fraction. It is not a small child mathematically, but a whole child today. From wholeness to wholeness we grow from day to day in *sadhana*. This is, again, a very important thing to remember. The consciousness is whole; it is never a part at any time. That is why we cannot have a half man, a half child or a one-fourth human being, and so on. In every stage, even in the lowest stage of humanity, it is a whole human being. It is from wholeness to wholeness that we rise. In the intensity of consciousness, in the quality of our experience, we grow higher and higher until we reach God-experience – an incomprehensible stage of maturity of experience.

Therefore, the *sadhana* that we have to adopt – the means that we have to employ towards this experience – is not the usual routine of practice: rolling the beads, going to a temple, waving the lights, reading a book, visiting a holy shrine, and prostrating before a Mahatma. All these are good enough as far as they go, but they are insufficient and

inadequate when they lack the spirit of this peculiar scheme of the evolution of consciousness from the lower to the higher stages.

When the spirit of *sadhana* is lacking, the routine of *sadhana* is like a corpse. You may be a very busy *sadhaka*, but you may be lacking the spirit of *sadhana*. Draw a distinction between the spirit of *sadhana* from the routine of it. Whatever be the number of times you may roll the beads, if the spirit of it is lacking, you will gain nothing.

The spirit is to be acquired from the state of mind in which you are. The mind is the medium of the expression of the spirit of *sadhana*. What you feel, the *bhava* that you enshrine in your mind, the attitude consciously adopted by you in your practice, is the real *sadhana*, just as a person is not merely the body or the physiological structure. When life is rid of it, well, there is no person at all. When the life of a person is sucked out, the person no more exists though the physiological structure is there as a corpse. The corpse has all the features of a human being, but we know how different the corpse is from a living body. We cremate that corpse though it is a human being, because the vitality is sapped out. What we call a human person is not the physiological appearance, because that is cast to the cremation ground when the spirit is withdrawn from it.

Likewise, *sadhana* becomes a mere corpse, fit to be cremated, when the spirit is taken away from it. When it is bereft of the spirit, *sadhana* is as meaningful as a human being with the life taken away. Why you do not achieve much success in your meditation or *sadhana* is because of the fact that it is only a corpse of *sadhana*, and not a living body. It is a corpse, but you mistake it for a living body

because it has the shape of a living person. The *sadhana* may outwardly have all the characteristics of real *sadhana*, but really inwardly it may be bereft of life. Just as a corpse cannot grow, so is *sadhana* incapable of growth when the spirit is lacking.

Then, what is the spirit of *sadhana* apart from the routine shape or the outline contour of the body of *sadhana*? The body, or the physiological shape of *sadhana*, is rolling the beads, going to a temple, getting up early in the morning, taking a bath, reading a few verses from the Gita, etc. This is the outer feature of *sadhana*. But you may be doing all these things without even thinking of it. The mind may be elsewhere while you pass through all these routines every day, just as you walk without thinking about your legs. When you walk, do you think of your legs moving? Yet, the walking is done, automatically. Likewise, the *sadhana* is likely to get lodged in a featureless, spiritless routine of *japa* and reading, etc., without the feeling in it being associated.

What performs the wonderful and magnificent task of spiritual practice is the consciousness in it, the spirit in it, the feeling in it, the 'you' which is to be underlined. The 'you' is not the work that you perform. You are something different from what you do. Your activity and profession is different from what you are. Likewise, the routine of *sadhana* is different from the spirit of it. The spirit is the feeling part associated with the practice of *sadhana*. Do you also grow in your feeling every day because of your spiritual practice, or do you have the same wretched feelings which you have been having in your mind for years? You have the same affection, the same loves, hatreds and prejudices, and

you have the same way of judging things. You have not made an inch of progress in your attitude towards them.

Sadhana is nothing but the attitude that you have towards things in general. If that attitude is also growing every day, then your *sadhana* is progressing. But if your attitude does not change, then your *sadhana* is the same stagnant muddy water which has not grown in its perspicuity. If your heart has not changed, if your feelings are the same, if you are not broadened in the outlook of your life, then your *sadhana* is not progressing. You have to gradually grow into divinity, and the characteristics of divinity have to be reflected in your personal lives, if you are to be convinced that you are progressing in *sadhana*.

The qualities of God are to be seen in our lives. It may be a small percentage of divinity, but it does not matter; the percentage is there. The divinity being reflected in our day-to-day conduct may be one percent, or even less than that. What is the characteristic of God? How can we know that divinity is reflected in our mind and our practical conduct? It is by impartiality, impersonality, freedom from prejudice or preconceived notion, freedom from *raga* and *dvesha* or personal attachments and unreasoned hatred. These are characteristics of an ordinary human being, and when they are absent they are godly qualities.

The more we grow into impartiality of outlook, the more also we grow in divinity of conduct. The more we are conscious of the goal of God-realisation as the central aim of life, the more also we grow in spirituality. Spirituality is nothing but God-consciousness speaking from within us in greater and greater comprehensiveness. The essence of our life is the extent of the presence of the goal felt even today

at the present moment. The more is it felt in extensiveness, the more we have grown into God-consciousness.

We become more and more relieved from the tension of our personality when we grow in *sadhana*. There is a greater sense of liberation of spirit from the thralldom of entanglement in life when we grow into spiritual life. We also feel more independent in our spirit, and our dependence on externals gets lessened. We will be able to live independently more and more as we grow in our *sadhana*, or the spirit of it. We are entirely dependent on many things today. Apart from the creature comforts on which we are dependent from the bodily point of view, we are also psychologically dependent on the world in many respects. All these forms of dependence get reduced in their intensity, and we become more independent psychologically and even physically later on when we grow into the consciousness of God.

We should not, therefore, make our *sadhana* an activity of our life, just as the growth of a child into an adult is not one of its activities. It is not a work that the child performs, but is something more intimately related to its life than the work that it does or the games that it plays. Very difficult to conceive what *sadhana* is. It is an inward growth consciously felt as inseparable from our own being, quite different from the work that we perform, though the work that we perform may be charged with a spirit of its inward growth.

Very few in this world can be real *sadhakas*. Though many can enrol themselves into *sadhana*, very few can be real *sadhakas*. Very few can reach God, truly speaking. It is very difficult to have social salvation at one stroke. We were

not born on the same day, and so also we all cannot reach God on the same day. We reach Him on different days. Perhaps, as Christ said, strait is the gate; narrow is the path. Only one person at a time is allowed, as in a queue system. We do not know what scheme is adopted there. Very, very narrow is that path, says Christ; strait is the gate. So narrow is the passage to God that only one person at a time seems to be allowed. Luggage cannot be carried, because the passage is so narrow. We have to throw away all our luggage, all our belongings and property. All things are cast away when we are near the strait gate. In some railway stations, there is a system like that. One person at a time goes to collect the ticket, and one person at a time goes out through the exit.

Narrow is the path to God. Our belongings cannot be taken there. So narrow is the passage that even the body cannot be taken. We have to shed this body also. So narrow is the passage that even the mind cannot go there. It is too gross. We have to shed even the mental body. The subtle body, the *sukshma sarira*, also has to be shed. We stand before the Universal Spirit as a spirit alone. The spirit stands naked before the Spirit. This is the disrobing of the personality, the *gopi vastrapaharanam* which is symbolically told to us in the Srimad Bhagavata. The *gopis* are the individual souls. They are disrobed completely. God takes away all the clothes – all the five *koshas* are taken away – and we stand spiritually naked before the Absolute. We stand there in the same form in which we came when we descended at the point of creation. All our associations are cast off, and we will have Sri Krishnarjuna Samvada in the true sense of the term. The individual speaks to God in

the privacy of its essential nature. That is the real Sri Krishnarjuna Samvada. That is the real Bhagavadgita that is spoken. The individual soul in its spiritual nakedness stands face to face with the Absolute. That concourse between the individual spirit and the Absolute Spirit is Nara-Narayana-Samvada – Nara moving towards Narayana.

But who can become Narayana? How can Nara become Narayana? If we adopt the principle of *satya* and *dharma*, Nara can become Narayana – man can become God. *Satyam vada, dharmam chara*. This is the essentiality of religion. That union of Sudhama or Kuchela with Bhagavan Sri Krishna in Dvaraka is sometimes represented as the union of *dharma* with *satya*. Sudhama represents *dharma*, Krishna represents *satya*. When *dharma* embraces *satya*, man merges in God. When righteousness rises to the status of Truth, it becomes one with the Absolute.

Sadhana is thus a spiritual effort of the individual soul, not a bodily activity merely, for a spiritual communion of the innermost spirit within us with the Universal Spirit. This is the call eternally ringing in our ears, coming from God, the Almighty, beckoning us towards Himself. This is why we are restless every moment of time. We have lost Him. We cannot be peaceful in this world as long as we have not gazed at the spirit of God, the burning fire of the Cosmos which shall reduce to ashes all our personal prejudices, and *ragas* and *dveshas*.

When the face of God is seen, it is like looking at a huge conflagration, a fire which cannot be borne or tolerated by the human spirit. Arjuna could not see it. He cried out in despair, “O Lord, come down to my level. Enough of this

vision!” The mortal cannot face Him. Great saints have said that no one can live after seeing the face of God. We have to be burnt in the fire of spirituality, and He shall take us by the hand as a purified soul.

We have thus to be prepared honestly from the bottom of our hearts and in the recesses of our being. We should weep every day as children of God. No one who has not wept at least once for God can reach Him, because when we can place ourselves in that position of even visualising what God is, we cannot help crying for Him. We do not weep for Him, because we do not know what He is. The moment we know what God means, our heart will burst into thousand fragments. We cannot live in this world afterwards. It was Buddha who said that one who has real *vairagya* cannot stay in this world even for three days continuously. It will be like a burning cauldron of live coals. Because we are shut away from the consciousness of God by the thick veil of *maya*, we are complacent here and look all right. We have many pleasure centres in this world, and we seem to get on without God.

But to awake oneself into the consciousness of God is like a madman becoming sane. We know how far a madman is from a sane man. A mad person lives; a sane person also lives. The mad person has his own pleasures, but the sanity which he has lost makes all the difference in his life. The pleasures of sanity are quite different from the pleasures of madness. Now the mind has grown wild, completely gone out of control. It is erratic in its operation. It has gone mad. “*Pitva mohamayim pramadamadiram unmatta bhutam jagat,*” says Bhartrihari: Having drunk of the liquor of error and sin, the whole world has gone mad.

We cannot see one sane person anywhere because sanity is only God-consciousness, and everything else is madness compared to it. So if an occasion is to arise for the crazy person to realise that there is such a thing as sanity, can he rest in that condition of insanity for a moment? Will he say, "Let me be insane for few more days," as we say, "Let us live in this world for some more time; let God take care of Himself"?

We are afraid of seeing God. We would like to postpone that condition as long as possible. We ask for long life in this world. Every day we pray for long life. It is like praying for long insanity, as long as possible. But we are in that condition, precisely speaking. We do not know how bad our state of affairs is. We have to be pitied, really speaking, if the truth of the matter is to be known. Our condition is wretched, most unwholesome, unhealthy from the point of view of the spirit and the reality of things. Therefore, we should not be complacent in our moods of ignorance. A real devotee is a real *sadhaka*. A real devotee is a real *jnani* and a real yogi.

To sum up, to practise *sadhana* is to recharge oneself with a new spirit and a new attitude to life, to become a different person altogether. You do not go back as the same person that you were. You have become a different person now. It is not that you start doing something different. That is apart. You *are* a different person, quite different from what you are going to do differently. Your routine and your practice may be different, but are you also going to be a different person? If that reorientation of your attitude has not taken place, you have not taken even the first step in *sadhana*.

May I give you a small outline, a short compass of what you preferably do when you go back home? Become a real *sadhaka*. To be a *sadhaka* is not to be an otherworldly person. I have given you enough information as to what *sadhana* is. You are not going to be a Sannyasin as a social outcaste, but you are going to be a newly oriented sane and mature person, more intensely than you were earlier.

You have to prepare a routine of spirituality rather than doing something with your hands and feet. Every day you have to grow in spirit rather than increase the time of your activities or performances outwardly. Resolve that from tomorrow onwards, you are going to be a newly educated person in spirituality, or the awareness of Reality. The consciousness of Reality is called spirituality; and the more you have of it, the more also are you spiritually reoriented.

Spirituality is not one of the activities of life. It is the life of life. The health that you maintain in your body is not one work that you perform. It is not a profession of yours. You do not say, "Tomorrow I am very busy because I have to maintain my health." Maintaining health is not one of the busy activities; it is a natural condition which you have to maintain. Spirituality is, thus, the health of the spirit. Spirituality is a natural condition that you are trying to maintain, rather than a profession into which you are going to enter. It is not something that you have to do for a few hours of the day merely. *Sadhana* is not a work that you do for one or two hours of the day, just as maintenance of health is not a performance for one or two hours of the day. You cannot afford to be healthy for two hours, and sick for the other part of the day. Sickness is not an essentiality; it is not a part of your life. Likewise, non-*sadhana* – that which

is contrary to *sadhana* – is not going to be a part of your life.

We think that the practice of the canons of spirituality is to be relegated to a part of the day – or perhaps a part of the life – because of a misconception that we have in regard to spirituality and the realisation of God. They are natural conditions imbedded in your own personality even now, but which have to be manifested in greater and greater intensity. That is spirituality. So the programme of your day when you return home should be a programme of spirituality, of the growth of the spirit in you, rather than a mere routine of fast and vigil and activities akin to that.

What should be the programme then, spiritually speaking? You have to grow into a better conception of God's existence. That is the first thing that you have to do. The whole of *sadhana* is a process of education. Every day you grow or rise from one curriculum of study to another. But that rising from one curriculum into another curriculum in your study or in your educational process is a growth in spirit and understanding. It is not merely a movement in space or a passing of time.

Thus, regarding *sadhana* as an educational process of the growth of the understanding from the lower to the higher stage, and a growth from lesser state of comprehensiveness to the higher state of comprehensiveness, you realise at the same time that for *sadhana* you need not move from place to place. You study in the same university or the same college, but yet you are different every day because of the growth of consciousness. You do not change your university every day – today you study in this college and tomorrow you go to another

college, and you go to a hundred colleges to complete your education. That is not done. The whole process of education is to be covered in one place itself. Similarly, *sadhana* is not movement of a personality from place to place, like a *tirtha yatra*. It is a *tirtha yatra* from within. We have to take a bath in the Atman Tirtha. This Atman is everywhere and, therefore, going to holy places of pilgrimage is not debarred, of course, provided it is done in this spirit of recognition of God in its universality.

The outward activities thus become a spiritual practice of karma yoga, provided that the spirit of *sadhana* is present in the outward activities, whether it is your *tirtha yatra* or your profession in life. For God there is no within and without. While God is not outside and He is supposed to be within in one sense, He is everywhere in another sense. Inasmuch as God is the Self, the Atman of all beings, He is regarded as within all things and not outside. You cannot see God outside. He is always supposed to be inside. He is inside in a special sense, not that He is only within a room or within the body of a person. The within-ness of God is a peculiar significance of the nature of God that we are trying to describe.

The Selfhood of God is emphasised when we say that God is within. What is the meaning of Selfhood? The Selfhood is a peculiar experience that we have within our own selves. We cannot describe it. You cannot externalise yourself, as you know. Your experiences are so intimately connected with what you are that it cannot be described. Your sorrows and your pleasures cannot be described, because they are connected with your selfhood. Can you write a poem about your sorrows? You may try to describe

them in poetry, but your sorrows are deeper than what you can describe. Also, your pleasures are more intense than you can describe in a language. When your dearest relative has died, you know what experience you have at that moment. You cannot write in a letter what experience you have at that time. You may write pages about your sorrow, but your sorrow is different from what you have written on paper. That is the selfhood of the sorrow. The Self cannot be expressed. The delight that you have in your personal experiences, the grief that rends your heart occasionally, are not matters for externalisation, either of writing or speaking.

Likewise, God is Selfhood, incapable of externalisation, either by language of expression or by any kind of representation outwardly in the world. In that sense of an inalienable Selfhood of experience, God is the Atman of all beings. But, He is also everywhere. He is not only Paramatman, but He is also Sarvantaryamin. So to conceive God is to conceive Sarvantaryamittva together with Atmattva. While nothing that you do can be said to touch even the fringe of God-experience – everything that you do in your life can be regarded as quite apart from the realm of Reality, from one point of view, because of God being the Self and not capable of being externalised in any way – in another sense you cannot do anything except by being God. As in one sense, nothing that you experience in dream can be said to touch the waking experience in any manner whatsoever, in another sense everything that is in dream is a part of the waking mind working in one way.

So while action cannot be regarded as the spirit of *sadhana* because action is what you do, while *sadhana* is

what you are, in another sense every activity can be converted into *sadhana* inasmuch as the spirit of God is present everywhere. So, karma can become karma yoga. I am just giving you an idea as to how difficult it is even to conceive *sadhana* – how hard it is even to entertain the idea of *sadhana* correctly, and how you can make a small mistake and spoil the whole affair.

Sadhana is, therefore, a spiritual conduct of your life, enshrining the spirit of God in your attitude to life, and a daily communion of your spirit with God, whether it is in prayer inwardly, meditation practice from within, or by means of your unselfish activities carried on from outside. When you do *sadhana* by charging your works or activities through the spirit of God, it is called *karma* yoga. When you deeply contemplate on the universality of God, identifying Him with your consciousness, it is called *jnana* yoga. And when you are restless on account of the separation of your individual spirit from the Universal Spirit, and you feel an agony of it and want to commune yourself with that Supreme Spirit, and you cry for it daily, weep for it, are restless without it, that is *bhakti*. Hence, all *sadhanas* are one and the same thing. They are different attitudes adopted by the soul towards God.

The recognition of the spirit of God in all activities of the world is *karma* yoga. That is *sarvantaryamittva* recognised in the diversified processes, events and works of the world. When *Atmattva* is recognised in the Universality of God, you are a *jnana yogin*; and when you weep for God on account of the separation which the individual spirit feels for the Universality of Spirit, it is *bhakti* yoga. The will employed in the practice of *sadhana* in concentration or the

focussing of the mind in the concept of God, for realising Him as Infinity, is the aspect emphasised in *raja* yoga. Thus, all four yogas are four paths leading to Rome, the same Citadel of the city of God. But the four paths are not four spatial movements, and are not even separated temporally. I shall bring home to your mind again the analogy I have given of the growth of the child into the adult, and the rising from dream to waking. That is the rise of man to God.

My prayers to the Almighty are that He may bless you all with the energy, the power of will and the understanding to recognise what He really is and how essential God is for your life, and how God-realisation alone can be the goal of your life.